M. KAPLAN DIARIES — TRANSCRIPTIONS

(13)

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After the meeting Davidson who accompanied me part of the way as I was going home suggested that the course at the Seminary ought to be divided into two parts, the first three years to be devoted entirely to study of texts and history, and the last two years to studies bearing directly upon the practical work in the ministry, such as preaching, education and social work. This suggestion falls in with what Benderly remarked last June at a gathering of faculty and students of the Jewish Institute of Religion, namely, that those who go in for the rabbinate ought to have done with the question of text study and historical fact. I imagine that in translating this suggestion into practice, it would be found necessary to have the students keep up their literary and historical studies, but certainly not to such an extent as to eclipse the studies which should have a direct bearing upon their function as rabbis. Such a sensible suggestion coming from Davidson took my breath away. It was with great effort that I controlled myself sufficiently not to tell him that Benderly had made a similar suggestion. He is one of those to whom the mere mention of Benderly's name is like a waving a red flag before a bull. It is unfortunate that the number of people who react that way is quite large.

Last Friday morning Miss Alice Seligsberg called. She works at a Jewish institution for the placing of neglected children in homes where they would be well taken care of. She came to ask my advice about a case in which a Jewish child who was neglected by his step-mother was referred by her institution to a city agency which is controlled by officials of the Catholic faith. This agency placed the child in a Dominican institution on the ground that his mother had been a Catholic and he had been baptized as a Catholic. The fact that he had been brought up as a Jew was entirely ignored, nor was the Jewish agency that had referred the child to them consulted or informed.

Miss Seligsberg asked me whether this high handed action of the Catholics ought to be fought or passed over quietly. I advised her that it was our duty to expose these dealings of the Catholics, if not in court where we would be likely to lose out, at least before the various organizations of social workers where questions of a social character are taken up for discussion. Through them the public would be approsed of the ~~xxxx~~ tyrannical and arbitrary methods of the Catholic officials.

Mrs. Poole called last Friday. She complained of a number of things indicative of the tendency to discriminate against the Hadassah, which still prevails in Zionist circles. 1. After having conceded 25% representation to the Hadassah on a board of 40, the number of members was later increased to 57. 2. Dr. Bluestone's interview in the New Palestine was censored so that all allusions to Hadassah of a praiseworthy nature were deleted. She mentioned one or two more evidences of unfriendly attitude on the part of the Organization.

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I gave Maurice Samuel the collection of Hebrew poems which I am planning to incorporate into a prayer Anthology with the view of having him translate them into verse. He explained that the method he employs in translating poetry makes it impossible for him to furnish translations of these poems for the SAJ as I had originally asked him to do.

The services the last two Sabbaths had an attendance of about 150. The subject which I began discussing the Sabbath a week ago dealt with the attitude conducive to Jewishness. I found that it could not be treated in one sermon, so I not only gave to it last week's sermon, but will also devote the one of next Sabbath.

Last night the local chapter of the SAJ sponsored by Spielberg, Cohen, Bromberg, H. Liebovitz and one or two more, was inaugurated. The entire auditorium was filled and a good many were turned away. An excellent program of Jewish music was provided and I gave the address. I was in particularly good form, although I made the mistake of speaking 50 instead of 35 or at most 40 minutes. In saying that I am merely repeating the opinion of those who judged the meeting from the standpoint of a show. If, however, those who participated in the meeting or the majority of them had been in the least interested in the main purpose of the Society, a surplus of ten or fifteen minutes in an address could hardly have the effect of cooling the enthusiasm. The trouble is that of genuine interest or enthusiasm there was very little, and what little there was was not consolidated or capitalized. When I came to the SAJ office this morning I learned that only four people signed up their membership of the chapter, the membership dues amounting to only $10.

This afternoon two men representing the Downtown Zionist District came to ask me to deliver a lecture on Sunday, Dec. 2. One at first struck me as a rough looking specimen (Mehler is his name; the other one is Shuster) and I was almost determined to refuse their request, but as he kept on discussing the present Zionist situation I changed my mind about him. Beneath the rough exterior a large boned man, his face large, angular and pale, I imagine I discerned a man to whom Zionism was an end in itself. He and his companion dilated upon the demoralization that exists in the Zionist ranks. They were both well informed on Zionist matters and spoke to me as veteran privates might speak to a colonel who had never served in the ranks, but got his commission on the basis of theoretic study of military tactics. Anyhow, I could not help accepting their invitation to sepak at the Zionist centre of the First District.

Tuesday, November 20, 1928

Emanuel H. Baron, a member of the Israel Friedlaender staff called last night. I had been under the impression that he was teaching at the Hebrew High School of the Bureau. However, I learned from him yesterday that he had given up teaching about two years ago, and had gone into the publicity business. Financially he said he was not making out as well as when he was engaged in teaching. This explains the main purpose for which he came to see me, namely, to induce Dr. Rubinow to appoint him as the head organizer of the UPA workers in the city. Incidentally he spoke of the attitude of the workers toward Rubinow. If they were not certain that Rubinow's leaving would throw consternation into the Zionist camp they would have made it very uncomfortable for him. They resent his treating them as wage earners by making them punch the clock and misjudge his efforts even when they seem intended to improve their status, as when he introduced monthly and bimonthly payments instead of weekly.

Before putting his personal request to me, Baron tried to make it appear that the main purpose for which he came to see me was the organization of an SAJ chapter in his section of the city. He engaged me in quite a lengthy conversation about the SAJ although I knew all the time he had something else up his sleeve.

This method of presenting one's request always prejudices me against the person who uses it. I don't see how one can help being prejudiced against a person who tries to fool you and who hasn't sense enough to understand that you might see through his method of approach, what he was really after.

This evening the UPA directors are giving a banquet to Weizmann on the eve of his return to Europe. It is certainly my duty to attend. But if I attend I shall undoubtedly be called upon to speak. I walked around the reservoir three times this morning

trying to think of what I might say. In fact when I went to bed last night at 1:30 it was with that same problem. This morning as I woke up the thought came to my mind that W. might be spoken of as God's answer to Israel's prayer p-119 . As I was walking an additional idea came to my mind, namely, that the practice of banqueting our heroes is a descendant of the ancient practice of bringing offerings to the gods. But just as it was necessary to have an Amos came and tell the people that the God of Israel ~~xxxxxxx~~ preferred to have his will obeyed to receiving oblations, so is it necessary to have some one point out that W would undoubtedly prefer to have us translate his ideal into action instead of having his praises sung. All who are dedicated to the realization of any great human destiny must feel as does the one who has planned whatever destiny awaits mankind that p.119 .

My difficulty is not so much in getting ideas as in organizing them. So far it is now 3.40 p.m. and I have to prepare my work for tomorrow. I have not succeeded in dovetailing the two foregoing ideas about W.

The hour between two and three was taken up by A. P. Schoolman the executive director of the CJI. Judith had warned me ahead of time what he was to come for. He, too, engaged me in a general conversation before putting his request. The subject was the Jewish Education Association. In the absence of Chipkin he was trying to do some work for them. But after two weeks he finds it necessary to discontinue his work there. According to what he says, the Association is in a demoralized state. There are only four men who might have accomplished good results if they had submitted to intelligent and expert leadership. They are Unterberg, Semel, Samuel Rottenberg and Jonah Goldstein. Unterberg is sour and petty. He is forever

watching the bills and will spend hours discussing whether the dollar a month that is spent on cleaning the typewriters might not be saved by having the typists themselves do the cleaning. Semel is interested mainly in making speeches and to as large ~~crowd~~ crowds as possible. Unless he can get publicity he will not work. Jonah Goldstein is a cheap little politician using the JEA as another means of keeping his name before the public so that he might get a judgeship. I have heard this from numerous sources. But as for plan or program or understanding of the problem of Jewish education -- not a scintilla.

What Schoolman came for mainly was to ask me to address his staff on Sunday Dec. 23. on the question "What are the Jewish values or ideals we should endeavor to transmit to the young?" The intelligence of the question made me consent.

I was very happy to learn from him that he was very much pleased with Judith's work in his school. I told him about the struggle that had gone on in my mind as to whether I should advise her to go into Jewish work in view of the progressive disintegration that seems to be going on in Jewish life. He seemed to think that from the standpoint of individual institutions the case was not altogether hopeless. His reply, however, was lacking the note of confidence.

In the midst of all this inner struggle Gluckesman of the Welfare Board calls me to tell me that Cyrus Adler mentioned to me last week about Israeli's incompetence and failure to make good. Israeli's problem is like a millstone about my neck. In case he should lose his position there will devolve an added responsibility upon me which will tie my hands and rob me of the freedom of choice in case I should want to give up the SAJ and all public work to devote myself to study and writing.

I came back from the banquet only a little while ago. Morris Rottenberg was the toast master. He presided with extraordinary poise and ease. I was the first one to be called on. As usual on such occasions I was not in good form. I was unable to draw on the necessary vocabulary. The other speakers each of whom spoke excellently, were Warburg, Frankel, Goldberg, Schulman, Marshall and Weizmann.

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Wednesday, November 21, 1928

The habit of writing this diary has grown on me to such an extent that I enjoy it as much as reading and derive much more satisfaction from it than I do from reading, because I feel, to use an expression that I heard from Dr. Schulman a long time ago, that I am engaging in an act of self-revelation. These things that I write up ought to have the value of a human document. Since God has not endowed me with a creative gift in the field of literature or art I think I might as well exploit myself as a means of giving expression to the creative urge. What I write down in obedience to this urge should have the same relation to what the gifted ones of earth do -- say a man like Romain Rolland -- as the drawings of the cave dwellers to the paintings of Raphael. The only trouble is that I can ill afford the time I spend writing this diary. I imagine that I ought to use every spare moment to complete the articles I ought to have ready for the SAJ Review, or the books that are still in the process of gestation. I wonder, however, which is more worth while. Writing which records first hand experiences, however crude it be, it seems to me ought to have more value than formal writing in which we merely add to the endless discussions about this or that abstract concept. A detailed description, for example, of all the mental tortures I went through before and after the talk I gave last night should, it seems to me, be more

interesting than my theory about God. But that detailed description must remain buried for a long time whereas the theory about God would make necessary copy for articles. To indulge in the former is therefore a luxury which must not be permitted to take up too much time.

I should like to describe the banquet which took place last night at the Astor. I thought I would come after the speaking had begun, because I was anxious to avoid being called on. Unfortunately they were still eating the fish -- it was, of course, a kosher meal.

I was given a place at the head table next to Judge Lewis. Weizmann came over to greet me; Warburg happening to pass my way stopped to converse with me; other people also came over. Then Rottenberg served notice that I would be called on as the first speaker. From that moment my nerves were on edge. Lipsky's reference to indigestion that he developed as a result of his anxiety at banquets occasioned by his having to make speeches was not calculated to give me any encouragement. When Joe Levy came over to me I suffered momentary aphasia and forgot Judge Lewis' name so that I was unable to introduce him to Levy. It is this aphasia that accounts for my inability to draw on a sufficiently large vocabulary in developing my thought. When I begin to speak I feel as though I was trying to swim with a cramp in my leg. Now and then the mind cramp leaves me and I launch out with some vigor, but soon it comes back again.

Every time I go through such an experience I become disgusted with life. In my attempt to take the matter philosophically I begin to act silly when on one is around. I make grimaces and all kinds of odd gestures and emit words like one who is gone out of his mind. They effect of this reaction went so far last night that I thought that I better get hold of myself before it got the better

of me. Even when I woke up this morning I still was under the spell of that reaction. It wore off only after I read in this morning's Yiddish paper the report of what I said. From the report it seemed that the impression I made must have been passable, to say the least.

What especially unnerves me on these occasions is that I am absolutely tongue tied when it comes to handing out compliments of a personal character and expressing the appropriate good wishes. This time I did not say a word about Weizmann's returning to Europe or about Mrs. Weizmann. Every other speaker had some gracious things to say about Mrs. Weizmann. Warburg called her W's minister of the interior. This awkwardness and mental inflexibility are no doubt due to my retired and unsocial life. But what am I to do if I have to be continually on tap and my memory is so ppor that I have to be constantly replenishing it in order not to run out of supply.

Dr. Finkelstein failed to appear at the meeting of the committee appointed by Adler at the last Faculty meeting to consider the problem presented by the inadequate homiletic training of the Seminary men. Dr. Hyamson who besides myself is the other member of the committee insisted upon discussing the problem despite Finkelstein's absence. I mentioned Davidson's suggestion. Haymson at once proposed a compromise plan, one year instead of two, to be devoted to the specific work of the ministry.

The following are the conclusions we arrived at:

1. Each student shall be requited to write four sermons during each year of his stay at the Seminary.

2. That one whole year be devoted to studies that have a direct bearing on the work in the ministry.

3. That the department of Homiletics be given the full time service of the man at the head of it and that in addition he be given an assistant.

Thursday, November 22, 1928

My desk has been so littered up of late that many important letters and other material to be looked over are misplaced and I have to waste precious half hours excavating some needed letter ~~of~~ or document. This disorder on the desk reflects itself in the disordered state of my thoughts every time I sit down to work. Last year I managed to clear my desk every night before I went to bed, but this year with the unprecedented amount of details I have to attend to I go to bed between one and two every night. I do not feel then in a mood to spend an hour or two clearing up the desk. When I get up the morning is so far gone that I hate to use up any of it on merely putting things away. In the meantime the additional mail is deposited on the amassed heap and I haven't the courage to attempt bringing order out of the chaos. The fact is the room is too small and crowded for the amount of reading material I keep on getting all the time.

At times, however, the confusion on the desk reaches a stage which simply makes it impossible for me to go on with my work. This was the case this afternoon. I had been very eager to sit and write up quite a few incidents and thoughts, but I found myself unable to budge unless I brought some order on my desk. This led to my discovering letters I had forgotten about, and picking up articles in the Nation and other periodicals which I could not pass over without reading. Although most of what was on the desk is now below it I shall have to spend much more time before my mind will be sufficiently composed to go on with my routine.

I have to stop at this point because Lena keeps on nagging that I go to supper. The children have to eat earlier than usual in order to be able to take their music lesson in time (6:30 P.M.).

It is now half past one in the morning. What I have accomplished in the seven hours. At 7:30 two Seminary men - Rubel

and Rudinsky came to see me about their sermons. Rubel has but little intelligence; Rudinsky is somewhat more intelligent but he has as little knowledge as Ruble. At 8:00 Rosenthal came and I spent with him a little over an hour giving him the subject matter of the three editorials for next week. From 9 to 10:30 I spent at the meeting of the SAJ Board at which there were only four other members present. From 10:30 to 11:30 I took a walk with Lena and from then till now I was reading articles in the periodical literature which I was removing from the desk and the piano bench alongside me. I had so many that I should have liked to write up, but how can I do it at this unearthly hour? There are some matters, however, which I must record.

1. Last night at the meeting of the UPA directors, I. D. Morrison was arguing against confirming Dr. Arlassaroff's election at the Boston conference as a member of the UPA Board of Directors. When Lipsky replied that it would create a great deal of ~~disturbance~~ disturbance if A's election were not confirmed I. D. Morrison remarked "We must once and for all make up our minds not to be daunted by a fait accompli" or words to that effect.

When I thought of this remark of Morrison's as I was dressing this morning there occurred to me the interesting midrash in which the angels are said to have discussed whether or not man should be created. As they were deeply engaged in the discussion, God said to them "Man is a fait accompli." It's too bad I didn't think of it last night. That is the trouble with most of my best thoughts; they come too late. No wonder the Bible says "How good a thing is in its time."

2. Rabbi Signer is preparing a Friday night maariv service which might hold the interest of the worshippers. He showed me the material which he was about to give to the printer. The material is collected from different sources, principally Mattuck's prayerbook

and J.H. Holmes book of readings. Not a single source is acknowledged, not a single author's name mentioned. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ It is as bold a case of piracy as I ever saw, yet this is committed for the sake of supplying people with subject matter for religious devotion. A striking illustration of [illegible] . Yet I am sure Signer meant no harm. He simply never had occasion to develop any conscience on these matters. Is not this the true explanation of the nonchalance with which people flout ethical principles in business? They are not immoral but amoral. They have never grown a conscience about business dishonesty.

R. Signer's father was a "shohet." Every morning when his son was in his eleventh and twelfth year he would wake him about five or five thirty in the morning and teach him Isaiah and Jeremiah. Seven o'clock his father would drag him to prayers and make him carry a big "Humash" under his arm so that he (the son) might count as a tehtn man in case there were only nine others present.

Signer's father "stuffed" his son during the years after Bar Mitzvah with as much Talmud as he could get into the boy's head, on the principle recommended in the Talmud ([illegible]). Before Pesah in order to finish a Talmudic treatise the father kept the boy for ten hours at a stretch. It was ten o'clock at night when he got through. He then gave his boy ten cents and the freedom to go to his relatives home and play before going to bed.

In spite of all this "stuffing" young Signer is a very weak brother when it comes to knowing the Bible or Hebrew or Talmud. He seems to have forgotten at the Seminary the little that he had learned.

Friday, November 23, 1928

When father and son studied during the dark hours of the winter morning the father would not permit his son to turn on the

electric light but insisted that he study by candle light, in order that he acquire his knowledge of Torah under the same conditions as his father did. In fact the father would tell his son that it was not altogether possible to reproduce those condictions for when he (the father) studied in the Yeshivah about ten lads would have to study by the light of one candle, whereas his son enjoyed the luxury of having the one candle all to himself.

I went to see Saul Tschernichowski, who recently arrived in New York and who is stopping at the Ansonia, Broadway and 73 St., to invite him to visit the Teachers Institute and to address the students. Knowing that I would converse with him and his secretary Dr. Feldstein in Hebrew, I read this morning some of the articles in the [illegible] so as to get into a Hebrew frame of mind. On the way to the hotel I was trying to formulate the answer I would give Dr. Feldstein who, I expected, would ask me to help him to interest some of my friends in the Tarbut in whose interest Tschernichowski came here. I thought I would tell him that although he probably hears my name mentioned as an and therefore as one of the I am in reality not of the or but merely a behind which some people hide to give the impression that they are doing their share of Jewish effort. Being merely a (mask) and not of the I can not exercise any influence on those amongst whom I move.

I found Tch. dressed in a sweather, a jolly blond haired heavy mustached slav featured man in the fifties. He was combing his busy hair with a small comb all the time I was with him. I had met him in Jerusalem and therefore found it easy to fall into conversation with him. He asked many questions about the T.I. He wanted to know what was the subject that I taught. When I told

him (religion) I purposely avoided the use of the word thinking that he would realize that I wasn't teaching merely the ceremonies. He expressed astonishment. I found it necessary to explain to him that I was teaching my subject from the evolutionary point of view and that I regarded it as necessary to help the students to adjust themselves to the problemsof modern life. It seems that Tsch. is so much of a Hebrew pagan in its aboriginal sense that I wouldn't be surprised to see in his home the images of Baal and Ashtoret and him burning incense before them.

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Saturdany, November 24, 1928

There seems to be much promise in the idea of approaching both religion in general and Judaism in particular neither with the creedal nor with the rational but with the poetic state of mind. Today I gave the third sermon on that idea. There were only about 100 people present due to the weather being gray and raw.

This afternoon I visted with Lena the art studio of the Palestinian artist Rubin. I was able to appreciate his landscapes more than his portraits which are done in what I believe to be impressionistic style. I confess that I am a consummate on Am-Haarez in matters musical and artistic.

As I was working this evening alone in the house I felt that I would like to walk over to Schrafft's for an ice cream. But then there occurred to me what I read the other day about Ghandi's ascetisism and I thought perhaps I ought to try to emulate his example and refrain from gratifying my want. On reflection, however, it appear d that I would be so busy the rest of the evening fighting off this particular desire that I might be distracted from my work. So I went and had my ice cream soda. Was this merely"rationalization"

or a reasonable conclusion?

There is no question that if one has received in his youth a thorough training in asceticism so that it is second nature with him he is at a great moral advantage over the rest of us who must have our three square meals or we are miserable. But missing that training, it does not pay to torture oneself and have one's activities disturbed by the annoyance of self-deprivation.

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Sunday, November 25, 1928

As I sat down to work this evening on comparing Wohgemuth's edition of the Mesillat with the first Amsterdam edition of 1740, my mind kept on reverting to what I ought to say next Sunday in introducing Tchernichowski. It occurred to me that in view of his pagan proclivities I ought to say that Tschernechowski's service consists in so retrieving the fascination of ancient idolatry that one can understand why it was so hard to wean away the ancient Jews from it. I hesitate however to pay such a left handed compliment to Tsch. who is, after all, to be the guest of the Institute. As this conflict was going on in my mind I came across the following passage in the Mesillat: p 1-9

Monday, November 26, 1928

Last night I got through comparing Wohlgemuth's edition of the Mesillat with the first edition published in 1740. I must have spent about fifteen hours during the last two weeks on that work.

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Wednesday, November 28, 1928

The 2nd meeting of the Council for the Advancement of Judaism took place yesterday morning at the Federation Building. The method of procedure was somewhat clarified as a result of the discussion of new people to be invited to membership in the group. Dr. Benderly asked whether our aim was to influence existing institutions which meant that we should includd in the membership heads of important institutions and be satisfied with whatever compromise results we might achieve or to conduct our deliberations independently of their effect on any specific institution in which case we should limit our membership to those who have anything positive to contribute to the deliberations. Personally I do not see why we should be wasting so much time on preliminaries. I hope that at the next session which is to take place on Dec. 26 we shall at/last make a real beginning. The topic for discussion will be the Jewish educational situation as described in the recent study made by the survey.

This afternoon I discussed with Dr. Finkelstein the problem of the Department of Homiletics. He felt as I did that the department ought to be completely reorganized. The very name Homiletics ought to be abolished. It ought to be recognized that my function was to teach content. The art of preaching ought to be taught in specific courses dealing with composition work and public speaking. For that purpose the services of lay teachers of English and oratory ought to be engaged.

I am very much disturbed over Phineas' (my brother-in-law's) inability to do his work satisfactorily. I had hoped that he would at last find in the position at the Welfare Board that freedom from anxiety which he and his family have been suffering for the

last twenty five years, due to his personal peculiarities. It seems that these peculiarities which have become exaggerated since he suffered from a nervous breakdown about two years ago stand in the way of the proper performance of his duties at the Welfare Board.

His case leads me often to reflect on the question to what extent is a person to be held responsible for his conduct. When I learn that in his carelessness he breaks his glasses and then spends $23 to get himself a new pair, I naturally become wrought up. But then I remind myself that he is no more to be blamed for such action now than if he had done it while he was in the sanitarium in a state of melancholia. When, if at all, may we be held accountable? Or is responsibility merely one of those necessary illusions, "as if" in the struggle for existence?

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Monday, December 3, 1928

Lena and I left last Thursday (Thanksgiving Day) for Long Beach where we stayed till Saturday night. I enjoyed both the change and the rest. There were few people about both in the hotel Frontenac where we stopped and on the paved walk near the sea over which we strolled back and forth. The pleasure of not having to prepare any sermon and of being spared the insufferable annoyance of witnessing the moronic looks on the majority of the audience was indeed a treat. But although I was not engaged in routine mental labor I used the time to read up the articles in the Ha Tkufa about Tchernochowski whom I was scheduled to greet at the Teachers Institute last Sunday. I also read some of Tchernchowksi's and Jacob Cohen's poetry.

I cannot say that I have adjusted myself mentally to Tch's. poetry. No doubt it is vigorous, elemental and passionately sincere in its sensuousness, whenever he sings of life and the flesh. His idylls abound in beautiful pictures. But why must he offend and

and blaspheme and demolish all that piety and devotion and self sacrifice have striven to create? The self suppressions and fanaticisms should not to the true poet be objects of hatred or even pity, but manifestations of life to be understood. To me this recrudescense of paganism, this self identification not with the Maccabees but with the conquerers of Canaan appears as nothing more than infantilism. Are we Jews so senile that we take pleasure in ~~imagining~~ imagining ourselves wading through the blood of the Canaanites? Too bad, that when at last there does appear among us one who is articulste and has the gift of song, he should prove to be nothing more than an overgrown adolescent destined never to attain maturity.

Seldom did I recite prayers with such gusto as I did after I read Tch's poetry and the poems of praise in honor of the ~~fifth~~ 25th anniversary of his literary career. But I have not yet come out of the saddening effect produced on me by the thought that at a time when we Jews are struggling to eke out some good from the thirty centuries that we have been blundering and sinning and dreaming and suffering, there should come along one of our own flesh and blood and tell us that our entire history has been a cosmic illusion. Tch. with all the simplicity and fervor of a Rousseau but with what in him is unforgivable ignorance and immaturity, would have us apparently become primitive idolaters. And for this our Hebraists applaud and adore him.

And since it is the fashion for the Teachers Institute to honor they whom the Hebraists honor, I had to arrange a meeting of the students and graduates to greet Tch. My heart wasn't in the effort, but a mediocrity like me must not think of obeying the dictates of his heart. How I toiled Saturday night after I came back from the meeting at Cooper Union and Sunday morning over the few sentences that I was to speak at the meeting!. This business of

teaching in Hebrew and speaking Hebrew which I am gradually acquiring some fluency isn't making me overhappy either. Chertoff was not altogether wrong when he said to me last Sunday that we have become addicted to a new idolatry. No matter how fluent we become in the use of Hebrew, the fluency consists very often in the ability to find readily something else to say besides what one originally intended, for in a foreign environment and with so inflexible and limited a gocabulary as the Hebrew possesses it is impossible to express all shades of thought. It is certainly next to impossible except for those who read and teach the language every day of their lives to think so freely in it as to have its words call up new ideas. The students certainly are prevented from discussing freely the subject matter studied. And worst of all this importance which the Hebrew schools attach to the ability to speak the language prevents the students from ever knowing the parts of the Bible which are interwoven with the life of the Jew - Torah and the earlier prophets. Not a single student in the Junior Class - after ten years of Jewish education - had the least idea about the brazen serpent which Moses made in the wilderness. The nea rest that one got was it had something to do with the miracle that he worked in Egypt.

I feel that someday I shall create a scandal among the Teachers Institute staff by declaring war against this miserable slavishness to mere language regardless of the cost in genuine knowledge that the students might otherwise attain.

Last night I gave a lecture at the Zionist Centre of the First District (52 St. Marks Place.) The audience was more attentive and interested than any that I have occasion to address in this part of the city. Certainly the questions asked were far more to the point than I have ever gotten from the people I addressed at the SAJ.

Last Saturday morning while taking a walk at Long Beach I formulated in my mind a number of interesting ideas concerning the place of Palestine in Jewish lire, but not wishing to write them down out of regard for the traditional prohibition of writing on the Sabbath, I have to spend time retrieving them. What a senseless thing this prohibition of writing on the Sabbath! How much more sensible it would have been to prohibit preaching on the Sabbath!

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Thursday, December 6, 1928

I cannot understand why of late I find it so hard to record my experiences. Only a week or two ago I actually found pleasure in writing this diary, but lately the pleasure seems to have evaporated and I have to labor on each sentence. If it were not for the momentum which I have acquired from the habit of keeping my diary I surely would have given up in disgust the attempt to write any farther.

There are no two days in which the "tenor of my way" is even. My inner life is much more like a landscape in which heavy autumnal clouds are being driven by a strong wind. For a moment it is luminous with golden sunshine, but for long stretches of time the sun is shut out by the long leaden cluds which wrap the scene in wintry melancholy.

Whenever I fail to write up my experiences immediately after their occurrence I find it difficult to do so late, expecially if at the time that I take up my pen to record them my mood has changed. Many happenings which seem important for a few hours after their occurrence often appear trivial after a few days.

I have had cause for irritation galore during the last few days. The Seminary students seldom fail to irritate me with their pettifogging questions and their inability ever to rise to the high level of enthusiasm, magnanimity or self-sacrifice that one has a

~~xxxxx~~ right to expect from young men who are preparing themselves for so high a calling as the ministry. Those who prepare their work seldom display an inherent interest in the subject matter or in the problems to which it might be relevant. The rest who have to spend their free time making a living by teaching or holding weekend preaching positions take a cynical attitude toward the fundamental problems of religion and Judaism. Their main concern is how to get through and get a job. With that attitude they learn to assume already during their student years that professional subservience (to the powers that be to whom they will have to look for positions) which robs of whatever moral or intellectual independence they may natively possess. The following incident will illustrate what I mean. One of the students (Meyers) delivered a sermon on Hanukkah which was a concoction of abstract platitudes about being true to the past. In my criticism I remarked that such vague talk about ~~xxxxxx~~ the past may pass for propaganda in a United Synagogue appeal. This remark apparently displeased quite a few students. I heard some half suppressed hisses.

This, by the way, indicates how unduly large is the number of students in the class in Homiletics, for such reaction is possible only where the mob spirit begins to prevail. I am aware that in the large universities students - when there are over twenty in a class - readily fuse into a mob; but a seminary, where the purpose should be to train intellectual honesty and individual discernment, ought to be the last place in the world to be invaded by the mob spirit.

I was by no means lifted out of my depressed mood by the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, which I was invited to for the purpose of presenting the case for the Zionist Organization. The Z.O. is at present engaged in a membership

campaign. I came to ask the Exec. Comm. to second my appeal to the rabbis.

Not being a member of the Exec. Comm. - from which I seem to have been put off by those who are now in power and who view me as an antagonist to their policies - I felt extremely uncomfortable. Fortunately I behaved with perfect calm while Finkelstein was trying to use the occasion to strike a bargain with the Z.O. to give the Rabbinical Assembly recognition in the Jewish Agency, and Elias Margolis was trying to obstruct my request on the ground that if complied with it would weaken the campaign for the United Synagogue. With Levine's and Chertoff's support, however, my request was granted.

Another irritant is having to officiate at a wedding. Fortunately there are very few weddings that I am asked to officiate at. Somehow they seem to take away a great deal of my energy and self-respect and when the wedding is that of a member's son or daughter also a good deal of time.

I do not know whether to feel glad or sad upon discovering how akin my entire mood of thinking about Judaism is to that of Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky. I met him about fifteen years ago when he and I were members of a group organized by Dr. Magnes known as "Achivah." But although I met him then I really had no opportunity of finding out his general philosophy of Judaism. All I recall is his saying that like slavery religion has outlived its usefulness. Some time ago I acquired his four volumes in Yiddish. When I read those books I found myself very much in sympathy with his ideas. But it was only today that in looking up what he has to say about Jewish nationalism I discovered that at the end of the fourth volume he has an essay entitled "The National Poetic renaissance of the Jewish religion." No title could more fittingly describe the ideas that I

have recently formulated about the poetic approach to Judaism in place of the creedal and the rationalistic. And not only in name but in the actual substance of the thought I find that Zhiltowski and I have so much in common. Yet I am a member of the faculty of the Seminary which is accepted as the stronghold of traditional Judaism and he is identified with the radical labor groups with which I and my associates never come into contact even in the remotest degree.

One of the factors which has contributed to my being in a better mood now is undoubtedly my success in having worked out in three hours the talk which I have to give before the Avukah Group this evening. The basic idea of the talk I managed to get last Saturday morning as I was taking my walk with Lena. But I do not think I would have been helped sufficiently by it, were it not for an idea which Jacob Grossman blurted out as I was working out the plan for tnight's talk. Rabbis Signer and Grossman were present as I was spinning out the idea. Signer as usual just sat and copied. Grossman whom I seldom took seriously sometimes puts a provocative question. This time he happened to make a remark which opened up to me a new vista of thought. Talk about a windfall! This certainly was one.

The idea over which I am cluckling like a hen over a newly laid egg is the following: It is natural for a parent who has cherished an ambition which he was unable to realize to look to his child to accomplish what he failed in. Thus we fulfill ourselves by proxy. This is what Grossman injected into the discussion. It occurred to me that this fact, extended to include not only one's children but the worthies of one's people accounted for the sentiment of nationalism. The need for self-augmentation which was satisfied by this sentiment is as a rule condemned by men like E. D. Martin

as base and evil. But why condemn this natural need. On the contrary I would see in it one of the most significant evidences of the life force compelling the individual to transcend his individuality.

(1 A.M.) The lecture which I gave this evening before the Avukah on the Place of Palestine in Jewish History was very well attended. (About 200) and the audience was intelligent and interested. I spoke an hour and answered questions for about half an hour.

Here I am sitting and cudgelling my brain what to talk about before the SAJ congregation on Saturday morning - Sabbath Hanukah. The people naturally expect the regulation type of propaganda sermon to tell them to emulate the example of the Macabees etc. But it is impossible for me to give that kind of a sermon because there is very little analogy between the Jewish situation then and the Jewish situation today. The Hanukkah festival is a striking instance of the fact that however much inspiration the past may afford us it can give us but little guidance in solving the problems that confront us. Why not then take that idea itself as the theme of the sermon and deal with the problem presented by the circumstance that the past should inspire us to live as Jews, but should not be expected to help us out of our difficulties. That we have to think out anew.

What is the significance and what is the value of inspiration as applied to the Jewish heritage?

This reminds me of the sermon preached by the student at the Seminary last Wednesday. He kept on reiterating the importance of being true to the past. I should have asked him whether he expected the Jews to be loyal to that past which was so silly as to eliminate the Book of the Maccabees. Perhaps I should take as my subject the strange circumstance that we owe to the Church the recovery of the

history of that period and therefore the self-respect which that recovery has brought us. Likewise we owe the biblical scholars the more intelligent reconstruction of the biblical past. But there still remains the humiliation that we have not had sense enough to appreciate what we have. We must live down that humiliation by making it possible for Jewish scholars to work freely and devote themselves to the reconstruction of the entire past and the proper interpretation of it in terms of human experience.

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Friday, December 7, 1928

This morning I worked out the outline of a sermon on moral courage. The point I make that it was the lack of moral courage in the wealthy and influential Jews that brought on the Jewish people the tyrannous decrees of Antiochus to suppress the Jewish religion. Jacob Grossman came to learn what I had to say. Signer had intended to come but was prevented.

It took me some time to persuade Grossman that the action of Antiochus was the culmination of a campaign against Judaism carried on by the Hellenizing Jews, and that the latter were more to blame for the danger which then confronted Judaism than Antiochus The only version of the events leading up to the victories of the Maccabees, with which he was familiar, was the one he got from the Sunday School Hanukkah plays.

* * * *

Saturday night, December 8, 1928

I have never come across any simile that depicts so accurately the kind of life that is reflected in this diary as the one that was suggested to me by a review I read in this month's number of the Menorah Journal. It is the simile of a merry-go-round. All that I have experienced in my adult life and all that I can look forward to as experiencing is about as much like real life as sitting on one of the rampant wooden horses on a carousel is like the ride of Paul Revere. This of course applies also to the millions who live far removed from direct contact with the sources of production. On the other hand with the kaleidoscopic changes to which even those who are in direct contact with the sources of production are now subject and with the atomising and mechanizing of the labor process who is in a position to say that he has come anywhere near that organic reality of nature which we humans yearn for as the roots of a tree yearn for the soil? Still there are different degrees of remove from that reality. A life such as mine is certainly at the furthest possible remove. I do not complain of its being sheltered although a little more room for chance and adventure would not have hurt a bit. But the worst of it is the complete irrelevance to the vital interests of those very people whom I am supposed to serve, except of course the students - who are more like puppets than people. And as on the carousel, a life like mine is an everlasting going around and around and around without ever getting anywhere.

Today, for example, was the first day of Hanukkah. When the question of what to preach began to engage my mind I thought to myself "Am I not trying to reshape the Jewish consciousness? What a wonderful privilege it is to be charged with such a mission! I should by all means take advantage of an occasion like Hanukkah when I am sure to get a large and interested audience to drive the

wedge of my purpose a little deeper into present day Jewish life?" Subconsciously I fear that I will be disillusioned, but I do not allow my fear to get the better of me. I imagine myself standing in my pulpit before a group of sincere Jews on the search for the true path and by dint of that picture I really hit upon a simple straightforward message. What could be simpler than an appeal to people to exercise their moral courage? I managed to simplify and popularize the idea of moral courage as the courage to say "us" to one's friends or to those whose friendship we need. I point out how we in America are especially in need of such moral courage to say "us" to the popular demand that prevails here that every group surrender its individuality to the amalgam of Main Street civilization (or lack of it.)

Then comes the Sabbath morning, somewhat raw and gray with occasional snow flurries, the first of the season. In fact, an ideal background for a Hanukkah festival. But for our denatured and dejudaised Jews an excuse - if they do not have to go to work - for staying indoors. In addition some rich Jew has a bar mitzvah celebration in one of the near by synagogues. The result a measly attendance of about 125 who are seated in small groups in such fashion as to give the auditorium a scabby appearance.

Do I act the temperamental primadonna and display any evidence of disgust and disillusionment? Not at all. I go through the program of the services as though as nearly as though my dream of a vast audience hanging upon my words were realized. I read a fitting selection from Macabees I. I read p 140 with the congregation instead of the perennial p 140. I preach for forty minutes with what I believe to have been fluency and good diction. I work myself into a fitting climax at the end. The services are over. I do not rush back to the dressing room but stand for a while on the platform. Not

a soul comes up to say as much as "Gut Shabbos." Only when I was trying to make my way through the crowd that is standing in the lobby does one woman venture the remark "I enjoyed your sermon." As for the rest of the people, a lass eyed response to my Shabbos greetings was all I got. Even in the house not a syllable is breathed by Lena and the children, (Judith had to be at the CJI services) about the services except for the remark that the Hazan was somewhat hoarse.

Even the dream of snatching the gold ring as I would pass it with my carousel hobby horse came to nought. Still the music plays on and I ~~xx~~ have got to make believe I am enjoying myself immensely or I am liable to lose my place on the carousel.

I just looked through an article on Jewish education by Ben Rosen published in the Jewish Exponent and noted that he quoted in it both thoughts and phrases from the "Toward a Reconstruction" and editorials in the SAJ Review.

* * * *

Sunday, December 9, 1928

Henry Rosenthal reminded me this morning of what I have often said about sermonizing as inherently bad because in the effort to popularize great themes one always tends to give a one sided and distorted view of them. This led me to add in self-praise that although reduced to the necessity of preaching I have done all in my power to reduce to a minimum the evil of distortion.

One smart aleck in a family is enough to offset any wholesome or constructive influence that might be brought to bear on them. I am sure the young folks in our Rubin family would have proved quite amenable to Jewish influence if it were not for the cynical attitude of Arthur Rubin. Having a keener mind than most of the young folks

in the family and having gotten quite far in his metaphysical studies he is looked up to by them as a superior being. Realizing full well that it is not through any constructive idealism that he can hope to evoke either admiration or emulation he had adopted the far easier role of making them gape with wonder at his cynical antics. His first understudy was Irving Rubin, a cousin of Arthur's, a young fellow just a couple of years younger, good hearted but with only average intellect. Every time this pair would take part in any discussion of the SAJ young folks who were planning some cooperative cultural effort they would pooh-pooh every suggestion and throw cold water upon every attempt to do anything. That was the case for several years. Now Arthur does not come within a mile of the SAJ. But Irving who still does come around once in a while tried this year again to discourage the young folks. Fortunately he encountered this time a young man, Morris Levine, who gave him to understand that if he was not interested, the young folks will manage to get along without him.

But the funny part of it all is how this harmful influence of Arthur's reaches down to the youngest infant in the family. It long ago reached Alex Rubin who is sixteen. From Alex it has come down to Edgar Bachrach who is nearly thirteen, and from Edgar it is getting down to little Charlsie Bernstein who is only six or thereabouts. This Charlsie will no doubt grow up into a very brilliant youth but I am exceedingly apprehensive of his being spiritually destroyed by the "smart alecks" in our family.

This afternoon the Teachers Institute students tried to hold a Hanukkah celebration. For the first time in my career I offered to speak extemporaneously in Hebrew in the presence of such crtics as the members of the TI staff. It was exactly like throwing oneself into

the water for the first time and making an effort to swim. I came off quite successfully. Every additional ounce of self-confidence no matter as to what the occasion for it, is certainly worthwhile.

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Monday, December 10, 1928

Dr. Soltes, head of the Lecture Bureau of the Welfare Board had lunch with me this noon. The occasion of his call was my refusal to accept the lecture itinerary arranged for me by the Welfare Board practically without my knowledge. Some time ago when the work began piling up I had made up my mind not to accept any more engagements to lecture. I told this to the one in charge of the Menorah Lecture Bureau. But the W.B. Lecture Bureau not knowing of my decision kept on making engagements without consulting me. Last week learning from a letter that I received from Greenberg of Kansas City that I was scheduled to speak there I called up the W.B. Lecture Bureau to find out whether they had made arrangements for my going there. I then received a letter giving the itinerary they had worked out for me. I called up the office and told Miss Wiesman who had attended to the job that I had made up my mind not to undertake any more engagements to lecture. She was very much upset by my refusal and referred the matter to Soltes. That accounts for his coming to see me.

In trying to persuade me to reconsider my refusal he tried to meet my objections and to make such changes in the schedule as to leave no room for any excuse on my part. I had to yield.

This little incident exemplifies the difficulty I am encountering in trying to emancipate myself from work that distracts me from my main creative interests. It is like trying to drag yourself out from a swamp. You manage to pull out one leg only to find that you are deeper in the swamp with the other leg. Of course if I possessed the moral courage to say no, about which I preached so eloquently last Sabbath I [illegible]

Soltes' visit opened my eyes to the fact that the Jewish Welfare Board seems to be doing a great deal more constructive Jewish work than any other agency in this country. First they concentrated their efforts on having the communities put up structures. Now they are centering their energy on the activities carried on in the institutions, developing the esthetic cultural and Jewish tastes of those who avail themselves of the facilities of the communal centers. According to Soltes' statement (and I think I can take his word for it, which iftrue is certainly authoritative because he has his hand upon the pulse of Jewish life in this country) the volume of Jewishness has been augmented three and fourfold within the last few years. I hope I shall prove just as wrong in my prognostication of American Judaism as Karl Marx in his prognostication of the proletarian revolution coming from the great centres of industry.

This does not mean that we can afford to do without thinking about the Jewish future. The prognostication is a mere incident; the important thing is the element of thought that enters into the attempt to study a situation and improve it. An evil prognostication which turns out to be false may have itself contributed to its not coming true by warding off the evil which might have occurred but for it.

An interesting sidelight was thrown by his remarks on the reason rabbis are not called upon to deliver lectures at these Jewish communal centers. He pointed out that the local rabbis object to any out of town rabbi being brought to their community because such invitations might endanger the popularity of the local rabbis.

This afternoon while taking a stroll around the reservoir I met Rabbi Joseph Silverman, rabbi emeritus of Emanuel. We stopped and talked. We soon drifted into the subject of the Zionist Organization. He described to me an experience he had recently at Hartford

where he was sent by Tannenbaum who arranged the speaking tours for Zionist propagandists. (Seemingly quite a comedown for a former rabbi of Emanuel). When he got to Hartford he found himself confronted by an audience of about 125 young boys and girls. He imagines that the Oppositionists have been trying to sabotage the meeting.

This led him to mention Stephen Wise's name as being the man who has been with the Opposition because of its efforts to fight the Jewish Agency. In this fight Wise is instigated by his unforgettable animus against Marshall who kept him out of Emanuel about twenty years ago.

"Wise's being kept out of Emanuel," Silverman went on to say, "was not due at all to the reason usually given. In the first place there was the objection against him on the ground that he had no rabbinic diploma. But as far as that was concerned he would have attended courses at the Seminary and would have gotten the rabbinical degree. The main opposition to his being accepted came not from Marshall or the Board of Trustees but from a layman who brought incontestable evidence proving his unfitness to serve as rabbi anywhere. I am pledged not to disclose the nature of the disqualification but if it had been bruited about he would have to give up the pulpit entirely."

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Tuesday, December 11, 1928

Soltes told me yesterday of the report he had received about the lecture I gave before the Avukah Group last Thursday. Those who had heard me often and were accustomed to my type of presentation of Jewish problems were very much pleased. The Orthodox minded were shocked and the "flapper" type (to use Soltes' designation) were confused. The one who gave the report to him is Miss

Weisman a former student of the Training School for Jewish Social Workers whose home background made it very difficult for her to adjust herself to my unorthodox interpretation of Judaism. I should not be a bit surprised if my interpretation of Judaism, and for that matter of life in general, especially of the phenomena of religion and nationality are as puzzling and unintelligible to the uninitiated as the modernist painting is to most of us who can appreciate only the conventional type of art.

Last night the SAJ congregation celebrated Hanukkah with divine entertainment and dancing. There were about 140 people present. For the first time in the history of the SAJ there was no need of calling up the people by phone to make their reservations. The meal was satisfactory hence the evening was considered a great success. It is remarkable to what extent our people insist upon being amply fed, and with real red meat in plenty too.

And who should be among the guests there? No less a person than Tchernichowski. I think he was brought by Dr. Einhorn. Like all the other men he put on the chef's garb of white apron and cap and seemed to feel at home, though his lack of English prevented him from being communicative. I do not think he possesses any sense of humor, certainly not of satire or cynicism. The more I see of him the more I find him to be an overgrown boy, a typical poet. He seemed to have take a sort of idyllic delight in the decourous fashion in which those present joined in the singing of the Hanukkah hymns and the recital of the grace, though, as he remarked, they did not understand the meaning of the words.

What a strange fellow this Sam Lamport is! Brought up in an orthodox home, surrounded by relatives and friends who are steeped in the orthodox tradition he has the courage or the impudence (I don't know what to call it) never to say Kaddish after his father who died recently. The explanation he gives is that his father did not die; why then say Kaddish after him? This of course is mere bunk but it is possible that he has actually come to believe it, now that he has committed himself to that explanation.

How may one account for his extraordinary loyalty to his father and his father's memory? At first I was inclined to regard that trait as the one exceptional and redeeming feature in his character. But upon second thought it occurs to me that the very high regard which he has for his father as evidenced by the support he gives to the Yeshiva is in complete keeping with his exaggerated ego. For what is so calculated to reinforce his egotism if not the claim that his father was a great man? The family pride in which the Lamports are wont to indulge proves to me the correctness of the construction (uncharitable as it may seem) of the tendency in Sam to honor his father's memory as he honored him while alive.

I just read through Henry Neumann's review in the Standard of three novels that appeared last year. I feel rebuked by what he has to say of disinterested love, "that love which is less concerned about getting affection in return than giving itself bravely." If there is such love in the world (and stories like "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," "The Man who Conquered Death" and "Death Comes for the Archbishop" would seem to prove that there is) what greater proof need we have of the divine nature of life?

God is the substantive term to denote the fact that life at its best evolves into disinterested love.

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Wednesday, December 12, 1928

At the Seminary faculty meeting I presented the recommendations of the committee in the reorganization of the Homiletics Dept. These recommendations had to come much as they complicate matters for me and force me to take a decisive step which will necessitate considerable readjustment of routine and a probable loss of income. The students have been complaining that they are not receiving adequate preparation as preachers though to be sure the standard of their demands is very low. In addition I have kept out six men from graduating this year because of their failure to make good in the sermons they delivered or were supposed to deliver in the Seminary.

The question now arises whether I should give up the SAJ and undertake the additional work that would devolve upon me if I were to assume full responsibility for the homiletic training of the men, or give up the professorship in Homiletics which I doubt whether Adler would consent to.

At the meeting of the Administrative Committee of the ZOA over which I presided this evening, it became apparent that the hope of increasing the membership of the organization has turned out to be an illusion. The only measure that might have brought about such an increase (that of engaging paid organizers) was voted down. The unwieldly character of the organization with the dominance of the National Executive Comm. nullifies all real attempt at putting the organization on its feet. I am sure that we have not heard the last about the decision to change the set up of New Palestine. Dos Yiddische Folk will also come to plague us. There is never a chance to get in any work of a cultural character. Soon the year will be over and nothing will have been accomplished except perhaps the reduction of the deficit.

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Thursday, December 13, 1928 Graduated Sem in 1911

Schechter was certainly a man of extraordinary wit. This morning Jacob Grossman mentioned two of Schechter's sayings. One was to the effect that "he was going to have his greatness cut off" meaning that he was going to the barber; the other in which he spoke indulgently of my "epikursos" as helping me more than anybody else.

Isadore Signer told me this morning that he has been very much depressed since last Tuesday because a group of his members told him that his preaching was above their heads. Since he has been doing work with me he has come to the point where he realizes that he has a positive Jewish message to communicate. When he looks over his sermons of three and four years ago he feels ashamed of their lack of ideas. He had come to feel happy in his work as rabbi, believing that he was contributing towards a better understanding of Judaism. Then comes this shock.

I have had such shocks quite a number of times in my own experience. Only yesterday it was administered to me at the Seminary by the students.

I put in a full day of solid work. In the earlier part of the day I worked out the outline of the second Avukah lecture I was to give tonight. In the latter part of the day I worked out the outline of the sermon I am to deliver on the Sabbath. Tonight I delivered the lecture and after that I had a sermon conference with a number of Seminary men.

I experienced the joy of discovery when in the course of the delivery of the lecture it dawned upon me that the true significance of the mystic Kabbalistic movement in medieval Judaism con-

sists in its bearing upon the restoration of the Jews to Eretz Yisrael. The main purpose of the Kabbalah as developed was to achieve such performance of the Misvot as to move God (a more reverential form of the magic notion of compelling a god) to perform the miracle that would bring the Jews back to their land. In the Kabbalah is therefore to be found that principle of Jewish history during the Galut which proves that the consciousness of Jewish unity was a functioning factor in the life of the Jewish masses throughout the middle ages. This is apropos of the question discussed in the introduction ~~in~~ to Dinabowy's book p. 148 .

In preparing these lectures I certainly got a good deal more of thrill than in most of the routine work I have been doing. Thank God that as soon as I give myself a chance to read and study I see so much more in the material I examined than most of the men who give it. Other people with a facile use of the pen would have been able to expand into volumes the ideas which suggest themselves to me. But with me it begins with this or that brilliant generalization. I suppose I act conceited in describing some of these generalizations as brilliant; yet I don't see why I should withold such an adjective from anything that is mine if I would be the first one to acknowledge it had I heard such generalizations from anyone else.

It is evident that the passion or the will to teach may give one as little rest if unsatisfied as any other keen desire. This is illustrated in the case of Jacob Kohn. What would he not give to communicate his ideas to the Seminary men! He has formed a reading group of about six men whom he meets once every fortnight as I used to do last year. I have often considered the advisability of recommending his being asked to give some courses in Homiletics, but the thought of a possible clash of our individualities has always deterred

me. One of the students (Gelber) expressed the distinction that obtains between Kohn's way of thinking and mine. His, Gelber said, is the metaphysical approach, mine the psychological and sociological. That expaains why to Kohn all of Judaism derives from religion whereas in my thinking Jewish religion represents an aspect of the Jewish civilization.

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Friday night, December 14, 1928

I am taking advantage of the advice I once gave to a man (the B'nai Jeshurun Congregation who is the son of the former president of Cincinnati) who came to ask me what to do about smoking cigars on the Sabbath. He told me he was an inveterate smoker, and for him to refrain from smoking, especially after lunch on the Sabbath, means physical agony, which puts him into a very bad mood with everybody who happens to be in his way. I then told him that he should yield to his desire to smoke rather than have the Sabbath associated in his mind with physical pain. I feel the same way now about writing down what's on my mind. I must give vent to my feelings or I shall be miserable the next few days. As I said only a few pages back, I can see no earthly reason for this taboo against writing. In my estimate of the value of ceremonial practice I have often pleaded for emancipation from the useless restraints by which the observance of the Sabbath becomes a source of unnecessary unhappiness. Time and again have I been told that I have not the courage to practice the freedom that I preach. Well, here is a beginning.

In contrast with the self-satisfied mood of yesterday the one in which I have found myself today has been one of extreme agitation. I have felt like a captain of a leaking boat in a stormy sea with nothing of the captain in me to help the boat outride the storm. The morning hours passed in that ominous dullness which precedes a storm. I refer to the time spent with Rabbi Mark Arzt of Scranton. He came to

find out what I expected of him in the matter of establishing an SAJ unit in his community. When I pointed to the thirteen wants he replied that they might be accepted by people without in any way making any difference in their lives as Jews. There was missing the technique by which to get people to live up to these aims implied in the wants. I suggested the technique he might employ. I deprecated his inviting into the SAJ group people who were not qualified to appreciate the significance of its program, and urged that he confine himself to a group like Goldman's in Clevland, few in numbers but of high intellectual calibre.

After I had the talk with him I felt as though I had been drained dry of spiritual sap. Organization talk usually has that effect on me. Then something else happened that upset me. Miss Machlowitz let drop the remark that she was sorry to overhear that my lecture last night was not so good. It struck the person who made that remark that I was not well prepared. I know that it is awfully stupid of me to be annoyed by some casual criticism of that kind. How would I be able to live through the kind of slashing of literary and artistic work over which people spend years that one reads in the light hearted and often conscienceless reviews in the weeklies? If I had possessed any real ability as a writer I might have proffered this fear of criticism as ~~an example~~ a reason for not venturing into print. But whether silly or not the fact is that being disillusioned about what I believed had gone over with great success robbed me of my peace of mind.

The next incident, for which I must have been duly conditioned by what I just described, was the failure of any one of the two dozen people who attended the services tonight to turn around and say "Gut Shabbos" to me when the services were over. Lena and all my children were in the synagogue. Neither Lena nor any of the children as

much as grunted a greeting. I am simply flabbergasted by that kind of attitude on the part even of my own family, to say nothing of strangers or relatives. If a janitor would have led the service I would have felt it my duty and pleasure to greet him after he was through. It discourages me to find the absence of all soul and enthusiasm in those who are thus part of my very self and in people whom I have been trying to sensitize to the amenities of Jewish behavior. Perhaps there is at the bottom of my resentment the selfsih aspect of love, the love that hungers for response, or perhaps even a certain degree of injured personal vanity. Withal that I cannot admit to myself that the action of a congregation turning its buttocks upon the rabbi as soon as he is through blessing them is warranted.

Is it a wonder that with all that suppressed anger brewing within me I acted the boor at the table tonight regardless of the presence of the Barons and their daughter Harriet by snapping back at a thoughtless remark of Judith's? Her remark was not meant to hurt me any more than Lena's or her omission to say Gut Shabbos; but it was exactly in line with the cold and unsocial ~~xxxxxx~~ temper of that omission. Just because I saw it in that light it naturally opened the floodgates of suppressed resentment.

In the course of the evening Isidore told me that Adele Joseph (Unterberg's daughter) was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis. The shock of this bad news did not merely unnerve me in the usual way that such news does, but it made me ridiculous in my own eyes that I should even give a second thought to such foolishness as I have been guilty of these last two days, first feeling cocky and sure of myself, because I happened to spin out a few ideas and then being thrown into a panic by a third hand report of what some silly little girl may have said. What extravagant luxury to be nursing my poor little wounded soul suffering from its imaginary ailments.

Here is a whole family suddenly brought face to face with the tragedy of beholding one of its youngest and most beloved members engaged in a wrestle with Death.

Only the other day I happened to come across a passage in Bertram Russel's book where he refers to the need of overcoming the fear of death. He maintains that absorption in interests take us out of ourselves, helps us overcome that fear. Perhaps! (It is now 2:00 A.M.)

* * *

Saturday night, December 15, 1928

There were about 125 people at the services this morning. The weather was very pleasant. Such weather having been anticipated, a number of our people spent the weekend out of town. Others attended at another synagogue the pre-nuptial calling up to the Torah of a young man who is to be married tomorrow to a daughter of one of our members. Counting those who attended the two services I should judge that there were about 200.

An interesting idea that came to my mind during services this morning is that the human being demonstrates his worth in humor no less than in tragedy. I would supplement the notion that the great dramas which prove man's power to transcend circumstances and defy fate, by saying that comedy points to the same truth. In fact, even more so, since there is more of conscious defiance in making tongues at fate than in taking fate seriously.

I came across the following statement in the criticism of Keyserlings Europe: "his self-preoccupation, this concern for his own development, the desire to be wise and seem wise, is repellent." Although this is said in criticism of a book which is not intended to have anything to do with the author's own personality, I suspect that

it might also apply to the contents of my diary. It occurred to me to try to write my diary in the third person and see how that will work. Although the hour is very late, and I have to get ready for a number of routine tasks to be performed tomorrow, I am curious to see how such a diary ~~will~~ would appear on the page, and will therefore proceed at once.

It was twelve o'clock at night when his wife and Judith arrived from the concert of Jewish music rendered by A.W. Binder whom he had boosted in an editorial in his SAJ Review as deserving of support. His wife congratulated him upon his having stayed home; he would never have forgiven himself, she said, for the time he would have spent because he would have considered it a sheer waste. Binder's antics would have exasperated him and the music would have bored him. Judith described Binder's compositions as devoid of ideas, development and taste. She felt that with little effort she could write much better music than given at the concert. "Why not give up part of the teaching work to devote yourself to writing music?" her father asked. "You underestimate your creative ability. If you would make up your mind that you can write you would find soon enough what to write about," he urged.

"If I am to succeed with my educational work I must give all my thought to that. I find that I cannot divide myself among various interests, so absorbed have I become in what I am doing that I find myself talking about it all the time, and nothing else seems to interest me," Judith pleaded.

This reply left her father wondering whether he was doing the right thing in permitting her to narrow herself down so early in life. On the other hand, in case she is not capable of producing any worthwhile original work would he not be contributing to

to her unhappiness in case she should try and fail? He saw in Judith the repetition of the struggle that often went on in his own mind due to his doubting his own ability to be sufficiently creative. He recalled that it was this doubt which decided him to be a stick-in the-mind in his old Seminary environment rather than venture into the unexplored as represented by the JIR.

Impelled by the hunger for self-expression he read avidly every article in the Yale Review that might help him to articulate his ideas with greater force and to feather the shafts which he kept in the quiver of his mind with the wit that would speed their course. When he read about Shaw's relgious philosophy reviewed by St. John Erwine he rejoiced at finding that he had arrived on the whole at similar conclusions concerning God as did Shaw. He regarded his own theology as superior in many points to that of Shaw. The category of chance which Shaw fails to reckon with he believed gave his own theology greater logical consistency. He then came upon a description of Arnold Bennet's literary industry and expertness. Reading that Arnold Bennett wrote on an average a half a million words a year he counted up how many words a page of his diary contained to see how far he measured up to Bennett at least in the output of words. Of course he realized that he was the solitary reader of what he wrote. A true way of estimating the relative literary worth between himself and Bennett would be to multiply the number of words by the number of readers. This at once gave him an idea of his pigmy stature. He was happy, however, that a sense of humor kept him from being very much troubled by the diminutive size of his ability and reputation and with that thought he went to bed.

* * * *

Sunday night, December 16, 1928

In the morning he went to the cemetery with his wife and in-laws to take part in the unveiling of his mother-in-law's stone. He was glad he was not expected to deliver any address. The prayers which he selected from the three prayer books that he had taken with him to the cemetery were sufficiently impressive and moving. When he read the prayer for a mother in the Union prayer book he found it difficult to restrain his tears. No matter how hard he struggled to maintain his poise he had to stop frequently and get his breath to go on with the reading. On such occasions it is not the specific bereavement alone which onstitutes the cause of his inability to control his tears but the universal tragedy of suffering and death. He regards this yielding of his to a sense of despair as undignified and in complete contradiction to the faith that a man of his calling should be able to summon up in himself and to disseminate in others.

When he returned from the cemetery he rushed to the Teachers Institute. Instead of being able to spend the few minutes on the train on what he was expected to teach, he had to digest in his mind the substance of the wedding address which he had to deliver in the evening. Since he began to teach at the Institute in Hebrew he finds it necessary to steep himself in the language for a few hours before he goes to the classroom. He does that by reading from various Hebrew periodicals. Not having had a chance to do that this time he found great difficulty in conveying concrete information to the students and had to hem and haw a good deal in the utterance of his sentences. Especially with the younger students the work dragged to such an extent that he was tempted to break the shackles imposed in him by the use of the Hebrew language and proceed to teach in English. But he had not the courage to do what in his heart he believed to be right.

The wedding took place at the Biltomore. The parents of the nride who call themselves LeVay, an American disguise for Levy, were united by him in marriage more than twenty-five years ago at the synagogue of the 85 St. congregation. He recalled his favorite metaphor of the carousel. After twenty-five years he reached the point where he officiated at the wedding of the daughter. The only progress he achieved was to get the people to refrain from speaking and smoking while he recites grace. That is as far as he has been able to influence the laity. He was bored to death the entire evening having to sit through the usual courses which were infinitely slow in being served because of the dancing which took place between the courses. He often wished he could dance but he was far too old to learn. He never had a chance to learn dancing in his youth and he was not persistent enough to overcome his wife's disparaging remarks about his clumsy attempts to learn.

* * * *

Tuesday, December 18, 1928

In a fit of curiosity he asked Judith the other day what she thought of his idea of having his diary written in the third person. She told him she had once tried using the third person in her own diary but she soon gave it up because it sounded artificial.

He reflected, "It may be so. But there seems to be a good deal more to this attempt of making use of the third person in telling a story about oneself than appears on the surface. It cannot be merely a whim. It may have something to do with the fact that each one of us is intrinsically a dual personality; one the actor, the other the onlooker. Our self knowledge would have been much further advanced, if language had evolved two forms of the personal pronoun which denote the first person, one form to designate the self in its extrovert capacity of being absorbed in and identified with a

Abraham

by Delmore Schwartz

To J. M. Kaplan

I was a mere boy in a stone-cutter's shop
When, early one evening, my raised hand
Was halted and the soundless voice said:
"Depart from your father and your country
And the things to which you are accustomed.
Go now into a country unknown and strange
I will make of your children a great nation,
Your generations will haunt every generation of all the nations,
They will be like the stars at midnight, like the sand of the sea."
Then I looked up at the infinite sky,
Star-pointing and silent, and it was then, on that evening, that I
Became a man: that evening of my manhood's birthday.

I went then to Egypt, the greatest of nations.
There I encountered the Pharaoh who built the tombs,
Great public buildings, many theatres, and seashore villas:
And my wife's beauty was such that, fearing his power and lust,
I called her my sister, a girl neither for him nor for me.
And soon was fugitive, a nomad again.
Living alone with my sister, becoming very rich
In all but children, in herds, in possessions, the herds continually
Increased my possessions through prodigies of progeny.

From time to time, in the afternoon's revery
In the late sunlight or the cool of the evening
I called to mind the protracted vanity of that promise
Which had called me forth from my father's house unwillingly
Into the last strangeness of Egypt and the childless desert.
Then Sarah gave me her handmaid, a young girl
That I might at least at last have children by another
And later, when a great deal else had occurred,
I put away Hagar, with the utmost remorse
Because the child was the cause of so much rivalry and jealousy.

At last when all this had passed or when
The promise seemed the parts of dream,
When we were worn out and patient in all things
The stranger came, suave and elegant,
A messenger who renewed the promise, making Sarah
Burst out laughing hysterically!

But the boy was born and grew and I saw
What I had known, I knew what I had seen, for he
Possessed his mother's beauty and his father's humility,
And was not marked and marred by her sour irony and my endless
anxiety.

Then the angel returned, asking that I surrender
My son as a lamb to show that humility
Still lived in me, and was not altered by age and prosperity.

I said nothing, shocked and passive. Then I said but to myself alone:
"This was to be expected. These promises
Are never unequivocal or unambiguous, in this
As in all things which are desired the most:
I have had great riches and great beauty.
I cannot expect the perfection of every wish
And if I deny the command, who knows what will happen?"

But his life was forgiven and given back to me:
His children and their children are an endless nation:
Dispersed on every coast. And I am not gratified
Nor astonished. It has never been otherwise:
Exiled, wandering, dumbfounded by riches,
Estranged among strangers, dismayed by the infinite sky,
An alien to myself until at last the caste of the last alienation
The angel of death comes to make the alienated and indestructible
one a part of his famous society.

from Selected Poems: Summer Knowledge (1959)
(New Directions)

for another, one Egypt for the next.
Some nights you still can see her, by some river
where the willows hang, listening to the heavy tread
of armies, those sons once hidden dark
in baskets, and in her mind she sees her sister,
the black-eyed Pharaoh's daughter, lift the baby
like a gift from the brown flood waters
and take him home to save him, such a pretty
boy and so disarming, as his dimpled hands
reach up, his mouth already open
for the breast.

Sarah's Choice

by Eleanor Wilner

The testing of Sarah

A little late rain
the desert in the beauty of its winter
bloom, the cactus ablaze
with yellow flowers that glow
even at night in the reflected light
of moon and the shattered crystal of sand
when time was so new
that God still walked
among the tents, leaving no prints
in the sand, but a brand burned into
the heart—on such a night
it must have been, although
it is not written in the Book
how God spoke to Sarah
what he demanded of her
how many questions came of it
how a certain faith was
fractured, as a stone is split
by its own fault, a climate of extremes
and one last drastic change
in the temperature.

"Go!" said the Voice. "Take your son,
your only son, whom you love,
take him to the mountain, bind him
and make of him a burnt offering."
Now Isaac was the son of Sarah's age,
a gift, so she thought, from God. And how
could he ask her even to imagine such a thing—
to take the knife
of the butcher and thrust it
into such a trusting heart, then

light the pyre on which tomorrow burns.
What fear could be more holy
than the fear of *that*?

"Go!" said the Voice, Authority's own.
And Sarah rose to her feet, stepped out
of the tent of Abraham to stand between
the desert and the distant sky, holding its stars
like tears it was too cold to shed.
Perhaps she was afraid the firmament
would shudder and give way, crushing her
like a line of ants who, watching
the ants ahead marching safe under the arch,
are suddenly smashed by the heel
they never suspected. For Sarah,
with her desert-dwelling mind, could
see the grander scale in which the heel
might simply be the underside of some Divine
intention. On such a scale, what is
a human son? So there she stood, absurd
in the cosmic scene, an old woman bent
as a question mark, a mote in the eye
of God. And then it was that Sarah spoke
in a soft voice, a speech
the canon does not record.

The teachings of Sarah

"No," said Sarah to the Voice.
"I will not be chosen. Nor shall my son—
if I can help it. You have promised Abraham,
through this boy, a great nation. So either
this sacrifice is sham, or else it is a sin.
Shame," she said, for such is the presumption
of mothers, "for thinking me a fool,
for asking such a thing. You must have known
I would choose Isaac. What use have I
for History—an arrow already bent
when it is fired from the bow?"

Saying that, Sarah went into the tent
and found her restless son awake, as if
he'd grown aware of the narrow bed in which he lay.
And Sarah spoke out of the silence
she had herself created, or that had been there
all along. "Tomorrow you will be
a man. Tonight, then, I must tell you
the little that I know. You can be chosen
or you can choose. Not both.

The voice of the prophet grows shrill.
He will read even defeat as a sign
of distinction, until pain itself
becomes holy. In that day, how shall we tell
the victims from the saints,
the torturers from the agents of God?"

"But mother," said Isaac, "if we were not God's
chosen people, what then should we be? I am afraid
of being nothing." And Sarah laughed.

The unbinding of Isaac

Then she reached out her hand. "Isaac,
I am going now, before Abraham awakes, before
the sun, to find Hagar the Egyptian and her son
whom I cast out, drunk on pride,
God's promises, the seed of Abraham
in my own late-blooming loins."

"But Ishmael," said Isaac, "how should I greet him?"
"As you greet yourself," she said, "when you bend
over the well to draw water and see your image,
not knowing it reversed. You must know your brother
now, or you will see your own face looking back
the day you're at each other's throats."

She wrapped herself in a thick dark cloak
against the desert's enmity, and tying up

her stylus, bowl, some dates, a gourd
for water—she swung her bundle on her back,
reached out once more toward Isaac.
"It's time," she said. "Choose now."

"But what will happen if we go?" the boy
Isaac asked. "I don't know," Sarah said
"But it is written what will happen if you stay."

from Sarah's Choice by Eleanor Wilner, copyright © 1989 by The University of Chicago.

When Asked to Lie Down on the Altar

For Marie Howe, and her "Isaac"

A guiding hand raised
above us, haloed in sun, the glint
of silver on the blade like the sheen
of sperm . . .
there was the boy,
tadpole swimming upriver, a miracle
about to unravel again, the birth
a matter (each time) of amazement,
and there, on the hill, as always,
sharpening his knife, the sad man
with the headache, the servants,
the high opinion of himself, the sand
it was built on, the mountain
his stand-in—raising its stones
toward the heavens, straining against the rain,
the wind, the merciless years that were wearing it
down, inexorably, the undulant way
that stone is worn
by the tongue of the rivers . . .
so, lowering himself
on the woman—the pride of his flocks, the power
of his tents in his member—he launches
this Isaac, tail still thrashing, who
grows in that inland sea where
the children of deserts lie down in still
waters, and there, in the placid place
of beginning, rock in the haven of dark.

Back on that mountain, the cold
dry air of an unforgiving
climate, the father
forces the animal onto the stone,
and now, the sun draws nearer,

The Opinion of Hagar by Alicia Suskin Ostriker

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even Isaac.

—GENESIS 21:9–10

And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate.

—*W. H. Auden*

I have no opinion
I am an Egyptian woman
They sold me and made me her slave
Like everyone else I was in love
With her beauty
She pretended to care for me
Forget about our nationalities, forget
About social rank, she would say
We are women together
That is what matters, Hagar
She used me
When she couldn't have a child herself
She made me sleep with her husband
—That old, creepy man—
When my son was born
She was yellow with jealousy
Of my round breasts, of my strong healthy boy
Finally she too had a son
What a laugh, a thin stick of a baby
Who whined and spit up his food all day
Just what you would expect
From those threadbare sacks of parents
But that was the end of me
She threw me away
Like garbage
You see how humble I am
My son is another story

Not like me, he is free and courageous
A wild ass of a man
He can read and write
He can run a printing press
He can shoot an AK-47
I call him Ishmael, I whisper to him:
Fight to your dying breath

But I still wonder
Why could she not love me
We were women together

from The Nakedness of The Fathers: Biblical Visions and Revisions
by Alicia Suskin Ostriker (Rutgers U. Press,

Helen Papell
720 West End Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10025-6299

HAGAR, THE SECOND MORNING

"When the water in the skin
was at an end" --Genesis 21:15

Where are we? my Ishmael sings
to the desert hills. Here, they answer,
here.

And You, God? Were You the sun
pointing west
after Abraham disappeared somewhere?
At noon yesterday it broke into hot sand
filling my son's throat.

Twilight cooled the sun like a cloud
of pale wine. Was that You? I sang thanks
until it froze into a cloak of frost
my Ishmael shivered under.

This dawn
a wind moaned like a mother
awakening to her dead child.

Sun scrapes my face,
the waterflask is empty,
vultures will soon surround the last
breadcrumb and us.

My Ishmael sings where
to hills echoing here, here,
and my eyes open
knowing Abraham intends never to return,
knowing he walked with my son
everywhere but here.

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Helen Papell
720 West End Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10025-6299

MY SISTER RACHEL'S HUNGER

"Rachel said to Leah 'Please give me
some of your...mandrakes.'" --Genesis 30:14

Rachel tore at the strings
that sew her womb closed.

Her eyes licked the skin
of every passing child.

I was born a healer. My eyes twist
inside plants that grow low.

After mandrake tea, Rachel awoke
singing lullabies to a doll.

I took my sister to a forbidden cave,
strings of frozen rain

that tie roof to floor.
Her breasts suckled ice

until the shadow of a child's hand
touched her face.

PUBLISHED

thousand and one things; the other form to designate the self in its introvert capacity acting as the detached onlooker and judge, evaluating the preoccupied ego, approving or disapproving of it, sympathizing with it or ridiculing it. Metaphysicians, of course, long ago recognized the difference between these two kinds of ego. It is only the scientific psychologists with their mechanical categories who have only confused matters by obliterating the boundaries between these two selves.

One thing is certain that the onlooker-ego is much more the product of deliberate cultivation than the active ego. The onlooker ego transcends the limits of the body to which alone of all bodies it has entree to the same extent that the life process does which makes the heart beat and awakens the physical hungers. The question then arises what relations subsist between the life process and the mind process?"

He began to grow dizzy as he contemplated the cosmic implicating his own ego and his mind reverted to his latest fad, filling his diary, postponing for some more leisurely hour the attempt to arrive at some working formula which might solve the metaphysical problem which he set beforehimself. He had a weakness for formulas. Never having had the fortune of ~~xxxxxxx~~ experiencing the thrill of firsthand contact with things he lived in a universe of words. His greatest of all bibles, the source and fount of all that which worthwhile in human life was -- the dictionary. But he never lost sight of the greater reality of the universe of things which was denied to him. He never heard the phonograph, radio or telephone without wishing it were appropriate to kneel down and worship. If he had his way he would have created a ritual and recommended specific benedictions to be recited before making use of these great products of human ingenuity.

All these thoughts crowded into his mind as he was sitting on the train bound for Schenectady where he was scheduled to lecture in the evening. But he was no longer satsfied merely with thinking. He must write. He began to wonder what this craving to write was which seized him like a madness. To be sure he had always harbored the ambition to write, but never was he so obsessed with it as of late. Not having any writing paper on which to jot down his thoughts he wrote on the back of a circular which he happened to find and when the blank part of the circular gave out he continued to write between the lines of the text. After every such writing spell he would experience a sense of calm as though he had succeeded in accomplishing something that had permanence to it, something, therefore, that rescued his life from the vortex of time. But before long that feeling would vanish. "How insecure is our sense of security, how transient our experience of permanence" he said to himself.

He was met at the station by two young men, Alopin, the executive director of the United Hebrew Community and a Mr. Cohen, the secretary of the local Zionist Organization. While being driven to the home of the latter he plied them with questions in order to have some idea of the Jewish Community of Schenectady. He gathered the following items of intense interest to him. The Jews numbered about 2500 out of apopulation of about 95,000. The city is the home of the General Electric Company which has under its control about 25,000 of the population. Finding itself confronted with the problem of labor demanding fair treatment, the GE resorts to the usual method of capitol; that of seeking cheaper and less exacting labor. This places the town in a precarious position industrially. There are five Orthodox congregations and one Reform Temple. About 100 families belong to this Temple. The "Arbuter Ring" is represented by about the same number of families. The rabbi of the Reform Temple is the

only rabbi in town. The Talmud Torah school which meets in the United Hebrew Community building has 120 children. The Jewish school conducted by the Arbuter Ring group has 40 children. The Zionist Organization number 50; the Hadassah 150. The impression which these items left upon his mind was that here was a Jewish community that will soon disappear from the map unless some vigorous spiritual leader gets hold of it, and that very soon. At present it is practically demoralized. There is no community spirit, and the knowledge of Judaism and the interest in it are at a minimum.

Bearing in mind these facts he tried to awaken his hearers to a sense of communal responsibility in the course of his address in "The Test of Jewish Loyalty." The lecture was delivered at the rooms of the Knights of Columbus. The weather was very bad. As a consequence his audience numbered a little over 200. Otherwise he might have had 100 more. He was told that the audience was more heterogeneous than it had been wont to be at these forum meetings. Although the men and the women did not seem to be of the kind that could follow an argument from beginning to end, he spoke with a great deal of warmth. When he came to the part of the address which dealt with the disorganization of Jewish life, he took occasion to refer indirectly to the duty of Jews to find themselves leaders, both lay and spiritual. After thd lecture was over only two people had the courage to put questions in the presence of he entire gathering. A few came over after the gathering broke up to ask questions. Among the latter there were two young men who belonged to the Arbeiter Ring. They took exception to the lecturer's opinion that the Judaism of the future will be Hebraic in character. One of them also objected to the emphasis upon the belief in God. As his parting shot he declared "I do not believe in God."

(after a lecture in Schenectady

On the other hand, there were some people, two women (of the Sisterhood of one of the synagogues) and one man (the president of one of the congregations) who approached the lecturer after he was through to get his advice about securing a rabbi who could help to put some life into the community. He gave the man to understand that if he will try to cater to the older people he will destroy the community. It was evident to him that the younger people were suffering from an overdose of p. 159 which was responsible for their doing nothing to reconstruct Jewish life in accordance with their outlook. They are afraid of hurting the feelings of their narrow-minded, bigoted parents whom they regard with a degree of reverence which those parents never merited. It dawned on him that numerous other congregations in this country are suffering from the evil of exaggerated filial piety. He recalled that in the first congregation where he ministered that condition obtained. Much as many of the younger folks had agreed with him as to the need of meeting the problems of Jewish life in a new way they never supported him in any of his suggestions because they would not think of displeasing their elders. Some one, he thought, ought to write a book that would deal with Jewish life in the same spirit as Butler's "The Way of All Flesh" deals with English life. That book exercised an emancipating influence upon him. Although he never had been an idolatrous worshipper of his parents, he could not in his younger days help doubting the rightness of his attitude toward his parents in oft questioning their wisdom and even their authority. He ceased to be troubled by such compunctions after he read Butler's book. That is why he now felt the need of such a book for Jewish life.

He stayed overnight at Schenectady and took the train for New York. After whiling away an hour or two on the three outstanding humorous periodicals which did not succeed in evoking from him more than one or two faint inward smiles, he betook himself to thinking about the question of Jewish nationhood which was to be the subject of his third lecture the coming Thursday night before the Arukah. He worked out the following outline:

1. At the basis of the impassioned belief that the time will come when God would in extraordinary miraculous fashion lead His people back to their land was the irresistible call to nationhood, a call which the Jews felt in their blood and in their souls to a far more intense degree than the members of any other people.

2. The important question upon the answer to which will depend whether that call should be heeded now that it has grown fainter and that it is being gradually silenced by other claims and distractions, is whether the call of nationhood is the call of the wild or the call of the spirit.

3. The answer must be based, <u>first</u>, upon proof that nationhood is so much part of human life that not only can it not be suppressed but that it crops up in the most unexpected quarters, in other words that it is inevitable. This is borne out by the following historical facts: a) The birth of modern science instead of retarding national development by reason of its giving rise to better means of communication and to transnational interests, was simultaneous with the birth of modern nationalities, English, Dutch, French, German, etc. b) The War which seemedto have been precipitated by national animosities should logically have given nationalism a set back. Instead it was followed by the birth of new national ties and the intensification of national sentiment. c) The Soviet Republic which has been established on an anti-nationalistic ideology, recognizing

in that ideology a means of diverting the mind of the workers and the peasants from the class struggle, has nevertheless had to reckon with the various national groups and cultures that go to make up the Russian Republic. These national groups have far greater freedom than they ever had under the Czarist regime. To be sure, the Communists try to save their face by claiming that they are only utilizing the national sentiment to destroy the capitalistic system but in the meantime they are fortifying nationhood. Likewise Russia as a whole is developing a national sentiment of its own.

Secondly, upon a rationale of nationhood. Its rationale is the fact that association based upon geographical propinquity is the indispensable prerequisite to all those efforts by which the human being endeavors to transcend the limitations of his physical nature. Of course if we take the view that the human being is only another species of animal and that life and thought are only so many additional manifestations of a complex mechanism, the only factor that should be reckoned with is the food supply. Not only an army but the whole of mankind marches on its stomach. The only divisions that really matter are divisions of class, the exploiter and the exploited. This is in brief the philosophy of economic determinism. But if we hold that values are just as real as so called facts, and that they have a share in the determination of human life, then we must look to geographic grouping as the main source of values, or spiritual factors. Nationhood has produced religion and the arts. The conventional idea that religion produced the arts views the matter from the wrong perspective. If religion were the parent of the arts, the arts would not have flourished when religion is in decay. The only religion that makes a difference in the life of its adherents is the religion that is associated with a history and not merely with a philosophy, and a history means the history of a geographic group.

Christianity was victorious over the philosophic religions mainly because it adopted the history of the Jews and interpreted it to refer to the Christianized Roman Empire.

At the present time with the increasing tendency to have labor so divided and mechanized that very few human beings could possibly find their spiritual self-fulfillment in their labor, nationhood is becoming all the more important as a compensation for the fragmentary life of the worker. More than ever will he have to live vicariously through the other members of the nation, in order to round out his own limited existence. How is it possible to compare the opportunities for vicarious living presented by so variegated and permanent a group as one's nation (or geographic [illegible]) with those offered by one's industrial group which is never more than transient and to which one belongs only for a limited number of years, or those offered by any other purposive group?

Thirdly, upon a rationale of Jewish nationhood. Such a rationale must consist of a workable plan that will indicate how the nationhood of the Jew is to function in view of its present dissociation from territory. That the functioning of that nationhood is inconceivable without some territory is now quite self-evident. Assuming, however, that such a territory will be set aside for those who want to get back to reinstate Jewish nationhood, what is to be the status of those Jews who will remain in the Diaspora? There can not be one answer for all the Jews in the Diaspora. In the minority countries the Jews will exercise a large measure of cultural self-determination. In America the nationhood of the Jew will have to be limited to such cultural life as effective communal organization that exercises a disciplinary, educational and palliative control over the individual Jew.

In the evening his wife persuaded him to pay a condolence call on people who are related to S. C. Lamport's wife. She lost a sister recently. He had seen that sister of Mrs. Lamport about twenty years ago just in passing. Recently she became a seat holder in the Bnai Jeshurun Synagogue and her funeral took place from there. His wife had told him that Mrs. Lamport could not get over the attentive and solicitous fashion in which the sextion of the B.J. synagogue took care of the funeral. When he met Mrs. Lamport at the home of her late sister she started off at once on how wonderful it is to have a congregation take away the gruesome aspect of the funeral by all manner of courteous attention to the needs of the mourners. And why can't the SAJ do likewise? He realized that Mrs. Lamport was voicing what most people want religion for. They want it to cover up as much as possible in one form or another the pain of bereavement. They have no use for it in the matters that concern the work or the pleasure of the living.

But that was not the end of the mental torment to which he was to be subjected. Sitting down alongside Mr. Straus, the husband of the woman that died he was outraged by the way Mr. Strauss set himself up as an authority on questions of the meaning of life and in the name of logic made sweeping assertions that were a concoction of phrases he must have caught up from atheistic literature. The writer found himself in a peculiar position. Not to answer would have meant acquiescence. And when he did try to argue he was met with a gruffness that made him wince.

Instead of rebelling outright and saying to his wife that he ought to be excused from such unnecessary ordeals, he resigned himself to his fate by saying to himself that he must learn to endure being humiliated once in a while -- it's part of his calling.

* * * *

Wednesday,
December 19, 1928

I'm through with the pose which I assumed in the preceding items and shall be as completely and naturally myself as I enjoy being. I should certainly be suspected of being devoid of any sense of humor if I kept up this third person business much longer. To resume then in the customary vein:

This morning Prof. Davidson called a number of the Seminary faculty who happened to be inthe building into his room to ask them to reconsider the resolution with reference to some of the applicants for graduation to the effect that they were to devote themselves an additional year to the study of homiletics. He claimed that it would not be feasible to keep Katcher from graduating; others felt that Schonfeld would not benefit by an additional year. As for Glatt, the fact of his having to get his college degree was sufficient reason to exclude him from graduation. A plea was made in behalf of Rudinsky but I refused to yield. There was agreement as to Babnet that he might profit by another year's stay.

The hours in Midrash and Homiletics passed without any untoward incident. The sermon hour is always a source of annoyance to me. This time that annoyance was caused by the unwarranted praise meted out to the student who preached a sermon that was crude in content, and in form and by Fedder's caustic interpolations. After the hour he explained that he had not meant to offend. Fortunately I had managed to mete out my rebuke to him without humiliating him.

In the afternoon Glatt came to see me about the letter which he had received telling him that he must devote an additional year to Homiletics. I got quite excited when I learned from him that he was told by Davidson and Adler that he would be eligible to hold a position. In case that position would be out of town my purpose in insisting upon his doing work in homiletics would be frustrated. In

the end I explained to Glatt that his staying over for another year was contingent upon the reorganization of the Dept. Homiletics since without such reorganization there would be no one to do with him the work that he needed.

Dr. Hover and Mr. Dinin came to see me with reference to a number of suggested changes in the Israel Friedlaender Classes. I felt that these suggestions ought to be taken up in the presence of Dr. Adler. I shall therefore arrange when the four of us could meet to discuss the new problems that are confronting the classes because of the opportunities offered by the Teachers Institute of the Hebrew Union College.

Incidentally, Ilearned of the lack of cooperation on the part of Rabbis Minkin in the matter of turning to the Friedlaender Classes for teachers for his Sunday School but going to the TI of the Hebrew Union College. Likewise Rabbi Levinthal claims there is no room for the classes in his Center when as a matter of fact there is both room for such classes and a demand for them.

I attended the UPA Board meeting tonight. Every time Mrs. Poole opened her mouth my blood pressure must have risen. She is forever raising objections and always of an obstructive character. Her pecksniffian whine gets on my nerves. This evening she let loose a tirade against the ZOA. The occasion was the innocent suggestion made by Liebovitz that the UPA regional directors be permitted to use their spare time to work for the ZOA. Mrs. Poole strenuously objected on the ground that that would mean that UPA is perpetuating the machinery of the ZOA. I was surprised to hear even friend Neumann describe the relation between Zionist organization strength and UPA returns as mythical. He, too, of course, also spoke as a partisan anti- ZOA man.

Thursday, December 20, 1928

This morning I improved on the outline which I wrote out a few pages back. That completed the three lectures which I gave on the theory of Jewish nationalism. In this last lecture too I hit upon what to me appears an excellent formulation of the status of the Jews in the Diaspora, especially in America. The ~~xxxxxx~~ attendance at this lecture was not as good as in the previous ones. I don't know what it is that has rendered me so sensitive of late to the reaction and the opinion of listeners. On the whole, however, I am very glad that I was stimulated to formulate some new ideas on the problem of Judaism. This is the third series of talks this fall which should afford excellent material for elaborate working up. The first series was the one I gave during the High Holiday season. The second was on the poetic approach toward Judaism, and this last one on nationalism. For the present they are like the carbon drawing which the portrait painter makes before he begins to put on the colors.

* * *

Friday, December 21, 1928

This morning Rabbi Grossman and Signer sat in with me as I worked out the outline for tomorrow's sermon. I don't know what has happened to Signer of late. He seems so passive. I suspect he is downhearted because his efforts at taking his sermon work more seriously have not met with an appreciative response. He was asked to preach on the popular novel "The Bridge of San Luis Rey." This is a very serious situation. The struggle of the Jewish sermon for a place in the thought life of the Jew is in a way ~~the~~ representative of the life struggle waged by the Jewish consciousness. The rabbi as the mouthpiece of the Jewish consciousness should insist upon doing nothing that will compromise it. By taking as his text the current novel or paly he may be able to hold the interest of the listener who being devoid of Jewish background and to whom Jewish

idea content is alien, but he only deceives himself if he believes that he has lived up to his function as a rabbi. Insofar as he availed himself of a non-Jewish text to drive home a truth, even if it be a truth of Jewish application, he has confirmed in the mind of the hearer the more or less conscious assumption that ~~xx~~ anything worthwhile listening to must be taken from non-Jewish sources. It is a fallacy to believe that in a sermon the application is the all important element. In the long run the application accomplishes only one purpose. It drives the text more deeply into the ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ consciousness of the hearer.

The foregoing considerations are to me much more than ~~xxxxx~~ theoretical just now. It will not be long before Adler will interview me concerning the suggestion which I brought in as chairman of the special committee appointed by him on the question of the reorganization of the department of Homiletics. Instead of frightening me off the difficulties inherent in qualifying the men at the Seminary to preach effective Jewish sermons that could ultimately win a place for themselves in the Jewish pulpit tempts me to assume full charge of the work in Homiletics. Homiletics would not merely be a matter of teaching the men how to preach, but of upholding a cause, the cause of the Jewish word and the Jewish text as the chief inspiration to the higher life. But to make any headway with a militant Homiletics of that kind I would have to give all my time and energy to it. The price would not only be foregoing various emoluments I derive from my other work, but possibly having to narrow my intellectual interests to those bearing directly upon Homiletics. I would have to give up all hope of doing any creative thinking on the interpretation of the past or present of Judaism.

And behind the alternatives of continuing or giving up the work of Homiletics there is the eternal gnawing doubt concerning the

very future of Judaism. Again I dipped into the He-Ated (Vol. VI) and read the debate between Dr. Than and Ish Hurwitz. I see myself in both of these men. With Than I feel most of the time that we should stop whimpering and wailing but do things; and with Ish Hurwitz I often feel that this passion for action is only a way of trying to smother my doubts. I cannot conceive of the member of any people having occasion to utter a lamentation like the following which touches the depths of despair never reached by Job or Ekha:

p. 187

I am as superstitious as Samuel Johnson. I couldn't allow myself to lay down the diary with that awful dirge which I copied from the Ha-Ated. In just this evening at supper we were discussing introvert and extrovert type. To which do I belong? Judith couldn't make up her mind about me. I am probably of that average or mediocre type in whom both elements are mixed in equal proportion. Rather, they are not mixed at all. For a time I act and think the extrovert. I manage to get things done. But then again I begin to appraise in the light of permanent values the things I am doing and grow moody.

Again I reached a point at which I cannot leave off writing. Let me therefore mention the nonchalant fashion with which Grossman reminded me of the substance of a sermon on Jewish unity that I preached two years ago. When I asked him how he happened to remember it so well he replied that he preached it a few weeks ago at the initial Friday night ~~xxxxxx~~ service this year. I gathered from him in the course of a conversation last week that the reason he and other rabbis do nothing to help me circulate the SAJ Review among their members is that they want to be able to make use of my sermons which appear occasionally in it.

Saturday night, December 22, 1928

There were 110 people present at the services this morning The subject of the sermon was "The Magic of Jewish Unity." I read the news from Berlin reported in today's "Jewish Daily Bulletin" as a sort of joint text with the latter part of Ezekiel 37, which was today's Haftarah. Were the people interested in what I said? I have no means of telling. As soon as the services are over the entire congregation turn about face with almost military precision.

On my way out Mrs. Samuels, whose daughter became recently engaged and at whose wedding it was arranged that I should officiate informed me that her daughter had the civil ceremony performed by Judge Levine. The wedding at which I am to officiate is to take place on Friday, Jan. 11. The reason for having the civil marriage performed ahead of time was that without such ceremony it would not have been possible for her daughter to get the necessary passport to leave for Europe the evening of Friday, Jan. 11.

I was very much annoyed by this proeedure of the Samuels. I am very much revolted by the idea of offidating after a couple are married in court. The rabbi ought to be jealous of his prerogative to perform the civil as well as the religious rite, because that implies that the stateaccords him a certain degree of recognition. To recognize the rabbi is to give status to the community which he represents. With Jewish communal life occupying practically no authoritative position in the general civic community the few shreds of authority which it is permitted to retain ought to be carefully guarded by it. No rabbi should consent to act second fiddle to the civic authorities and act merely in the capacity of bestowing his blessing upon a fait accompli. He owes that not merely to himself but to the Jewish community whose interests he must protect and whose dignity he must uphold

With most rabbis only too anxious to secure their perquisites there is very little chance that they will take cognizance of this duty and go to the trouble of informing their people concerning the implications of having a civil marriage performed by an outside party. I certainly could not expect the Samuels to realize that they were not doing the right thing; I therefore told her that while I disapprove of the civil marriage ceremony I shall make no fuss about it and officiate at her daughter's wedding as I had promised.

Alexander Dushkin called this afternoon. In discussing the SAJ Council he stated that neither the Reformists nor the Conservatists seemed to be convinced of the need of having a special group or movement to sponsor the program of reconstruction. Freehof speaking for the Reformists maintain that this program can be dealt with directly by the Central Conference of American Rabbis for Reform is not committed to any static program. Likewise Kadushin maintains that the Rabbinical Assembly can be gotten to accept the program of reconstruction by those of us who subscribe to that program working from within.

If that is true I ought to give up the prospect of ever seeing the SAJ develop into a national movement. Judging, however, by the reactionary spirit which dominates the counsels of the Rabbinical Assembly there seems to be little likelihood of the progressives in the Assembly carrying their policies. The same is probably true of the CCAR. There is certainly a need of some concerted action on the part of some self-conscious group to compel both organizations to give heed to the demands of their progressive members.

It seems to me that I suffer from a sense of aloneness especially on Sabbaths and holidays when most people enjoy the society of friends and acquaintances. I am probably not sufficiently like the general run of people to have many friends, nor do I stand out sufficiently to have any satellites and flatterers.

A Seminary student came this evening to see me about a sermon which he had to prepare. I noticed that he had "Amiel's Journal" with him. Having come across frequent references to the book I was anxious to read it. I asked the student to lend it to me so that I might read it on the lecture trip which I have to take this week to Savannah, Jacksonville, St. Louis and Kansas City.

As soon as I got through outlining to Rosenthal the material for the next three numbers of the SAJ Review I sat down to devour ravenously the contents of Amiel's Journal. It gives promise of enabling me to find out whether there is any worth to this diary which I have been writing and which has of late become an obsession with me.

I was not far advanced with the Introduction before I was made to feel cheap in my own eyes by the following statement: "We may easily conceive him as a sedentary professor, with the ordinary professorial knowledge, or rather ignorance, of man and the world, falling into introspection under the pressure of circumstance, and for want of something else to think about."

* * *

Sunday, December 23, 1928, 10: A.M.

As a bicycle rider must keep on moving or lose his balance so the mind must be kept employed upon some task or it begins to wobble.

* * * *

Tuesday, December 25, 1928, 7 P.M. on train to Savannah

The hours I gave on Sunday at the Teachers Institute ran off more smoothly than on the Sunday previous from the standpoint of my fluency in the use of the Hebrew.

From the Institute I went directly to the Penn. Station to get the 6:00 o'clock train to Atlantic City where I was scheduled to lecture in the evening. On the train I met Rabbi Krass and his wife and subsequently also Lewis Browne. They were both bound for Philadelphia where they were to debate the question whether science has displaced religion. Not knowing that I would meet Browne I made a nasty remark about him to Krass. I said "I am surprised that you dignify the man by debating with him." Krass replied that the debate was wished on him.

Why in truth do I object to Browne? There is first the inherent objection of the professional to the free lance and upstart. Having gone through years of training and toil before I gained the public ear I naturally feel resentful that a young fellow who has never labored or sweated over all that learning - I refer particularly to rabbis - should be accounted as an interpreter of Judaism and religion. There is probably also a tinge of jealousy which older men feel when they see men younger than themselves enjoying greater popularity. Still I dare say that if Browne had won his popularity by dint of genuine knowledge of the subject matter he dealt with in his writings and unusual ability in imparting honest information I would have completely suppressed all such antipathy against him as had a trace of jealousy either professional or individual. However, the little that I read of his writings seemed to justify the charge of charlatanism brought against him by authoritative reviewers.

In any case it was stupid of me to have made that nasty remark about him to Krass. After all, Krass himself is by no means an idealist. Edman's characterization of him in the Menorah Journal

of last year is not far from the truth. And as probability Browne certainly excels him. I hope therefore that this will teach me a lesson to keep my tongue and not to blurt out whatever comes to my mind. That very evening at least I practiced that lesson. When Mrs. Krass asked me what I thought about Jimmy Wise's latest book I said nothing. In fact I became tongue tied in the company of the Krasses and Browne. When, for example, I was seated with them at table in the dining car and they were talking about being paid for the lectures, making it very plain -- Browne especially-- that the amount they got out of the lectures was all that counted with them. I allowed them to get away with the impression that I was going on this lecture tour merely for the money. I simply could not find the right formula to explain to them that while the income from the lectures was not the only reason for my taking these trips, yet it undoubtedly was an inducement without which I certainly would not even have considered giving up so much of my time to them.

As Browne left me he said, "I have often been anxious to see you. I believe there is a great deal in common between us." With this he won my heart and I at once felt toward him as a brother. I asked him to come to see me at the earliest opportunity and I am actually looking forward to his visit with a great deal of pleasurable anticipation.

At the station at Atlantic City I was met by four young men who greeted me in Hebrew. I learned afterwards that they were Hebrew teachers of the local Talmud Torah. On the way toward the Jewish community Center they told me about their Hebrew speaking organization which numbers about 50 members. I thought that they would engage me in conversation after the lecture. But nothing of the kind happened. As soon as I entered the community building I

was led up to the platform and began my lecture. I spoke a little over an hour. The gathering was rather small - about 150 - and on the whole not over intelligent.

If what Maslienship's daughter - Mrs. Oerksy - who drove me to the hotel (Shelborne) where I stopped over night is true, the general population is 60,000. Of these 10,000 are Jews.

This afternoon the Council for the Advancement of Judaism met at the Federation Building. Dr. Benderly reviewed the part of the Survey recently gotten up, which deals with the problem of Jewish education.

Iccould have elaborated at great length on the foregoing item but I just read a statement quoted in the introduction to Amiel's Journal which makes me think perhaps all this time that I spend writing this diary I might be employing to better advantage. "This journal of mine," Amiel writes (in 1866 (at 51) "represents the material of a good many volumes; what prodigious waste of time, of thought, of strength! It will be useful to nobody, and even for myself - it has rather helped me to ~~xxxxx~~ shirk life than to practice it." Yet it is generally admitted that his Journal has far greater value than any formal literary effort he might have engaged in. In fact it is one of the great classics of autobiography. But in my own case who is to help me decide which is a greater contribution, this attempt at a daily account of my inner life or any of the formal essays in religion, ethics and Judaism?

After the laudatory introduction to Amiel's Journal I expected to be thrilled by the contents of the Journal itself. I have read through fourteen pages. Except for the opening passage which

describes communion with God in rather common place terms, and the analysis of Montesque in the manner of Macaulay's analyses of character, there was nothing that added to the sum of my information or that energized my will. (The latter of course I should not expect from a writer who is the incarnation of willessnes.) But when I came upon the following statement, I was provoked into concluding that there is nothing in Amiel for me: "To love is virtually to know; to know is not virtually to love." That in my opinion is the height of absurdity. Love is all too often blind, so blind indeed that it does not want to see and know. Love that is uninformed and unintelligent is liable to do as much harm as hate. A good deal of what passes as love is only outgoing and inclusive selfishness. Love is seldom even self-knowing enough to recognize this element of selfishness for what it actually is. On the other hand knowledge which goes far enough to discover to us the common denominator between us and the people or objects we learn to know opens up unsuspected fountains of that unselfish love which is but another manifestation of the Life Urge or God. If Francis of Assissi addressed the Wolf as brother it was probably because he had that insight into the nature of the wolf which enabled him to discern how much of good the wolf had in common with him.

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Wednesday, December 26, 1928: On train to Savannah

As I speed over the vast stretches of the land I have a right to call my own I tingle with the love that a babe knows when it feels its mother's naked body with its tiny hands.

As I sense the reality of the New World - a sensation that I get from traveling - I lose all respect for pre-Renaissance humanity who with all their vaunted wisdom did not possess the temerity and

imagination to make their way to this side of the world. I have never had so much respect for the ancient and medieval civilization. I cannot imagine ants stupid enough to insist on remaining on one side of a rock when by crawling around it they might discover shelter and food supplies.

In the following criticism of Schleiermacher's Monolgues, Amiel sums up very neatly the spiritual aspect of human life:

"Ontologically, the position of man in the spiritual universe is wrongly indicated; the individual soul not being unique and not springing from itself, can it be conceived without God? Psychologically the force of spontaneity in the ego is allowed dominion too exclusion of any other. As a fact it is not everything in man. Moral evil is scarcely named and conflict, the condition of true peace is left out of count. So that the peace described in the Monologues is neither a conquest by man nor a grace from heaven, it is rather a stroke of good fortune."

I have copied the foregoing because every word in it verifies my own thought experience.

Apropos of the question of the relation of love to knowledge note the following by Amiel himself which disproves his idea of that relation and proves what I said before (p. 174) He tells us that he played in the garden with the children. "I made them examine closely the flowers, the shrubs, the grasshoppers, the snails, in order to practice them in observation, in wonder, in kindness."

* * *

Thursday, December 27, 1928: On Way to Jacksonville

I got to Savannah yesterday at 5:00 P.M. and was met at the station by Mr. Pinsker, the executive director of the local Educational Alliance. I learned from him that the population was 100,000 divided into Whites, Negroes and Jews. Till about two years ago there were 5000 Jews in Savannah, but recently more than 1500 left Savannah because of the decrease of business. With the transfer of cotton to the southwest, Savannah instead of shipping 3,000,000 bales per year shipped only 600,000 last year. Savannah has a number of survivors of old Jewish families of Sephardic decent. Most of the members of those families intermarried with the gentile population. The Jews take pride in a family by the name of Sheftel whose founder fought in the Revolutionary war. Today there are three branches to that family, Jewish, Christian and colored. During the latter part of the nineteenth century there was an influx of German Jews and during the first part of this century Savannah was utilized as a way station by the agency which tried to distribute the Jewish immigrants among various smaller cities in this country. A goodly portion of this last element belong to the Arbeiter Ring.

The only congregation there is the one that was founded by the Portugese Jews almost 200 years ago and which is now Reformed. It numbers about 1200 souls. The rabbi is Solomon, a graduate of the Hebrew Union College. He called on me at the hotel. He is not a well man, just having returned from Mayo's Sanitarium where he had gone to be cured of a malignant case of anemia. He looks to be a man of about 50. He has been occupying the position in Savannah since he graduated from the HUC 25 years ago. He deplores his having remained so long in Savannah where he has been unable to find any one with whom he could establish intellectual contacts. The only time he had an opportunity to engage in serious study was when the

Orthodox element had as their rabbi a Dr. Goldberg, a Seminary graduate, who died about fifteen years ago. Rabbi Solomon used to study Hebrew from four to five hours daily with Dr. Goldberg. He put aside all communal work to take advantage of Goldberg's companionship which he knew could not last long. He was anxious, as he put it, to make hay while the sun shone. It was pitiable to see the frustrated look in his eyes. He was as a young man one of those who go into the rabbinate with the expectation of intellectual growth only to find themselves disillusioned before long. I could see how eager he was to have a long chat with me about some of the fundamental problems of life in general and Judaism in particular, but unfortunately there was no possibility of my remaining over for any length of time.

The descendants of the Sephardic Jews in Savannah have been decreasing in number because those who were loyal to Jewish tradition refused to intermarry with the Gentiles; nor would they intermarry with the German Jews whom they considered their social inferiors. They did not admit German Jews even as seat holders of the synagogue. It took ten years for the latter to get a foothold in the synagogue, and another ten years before they were admitted to membership. At present these German Jews outdo their Sephardic predecessors in their exclusive attitude toward the more recent arrivals. They do not look with favor even upon Rabbi Solomon's participation in the Jewish communal matters outside of their own congregation.

The Educational Alliance Building where I gave my lecture is a sort of communal center where Jewish young folks meet for recreational and sport activities and a limited extent also for literary activities. Despite the lack of positive Jewish content there is apparently fostered considerable Jewish consciousness which is chiefly race consciousness. There is no Hebrew school in the

building nor do I believe there is one anywhere else. The non-Reformed elements are without a rabbi. Not long ago the Orthodox element had the man whom they had engaged as Hebrew teacher to function as rabbi, although he admitted frankly that he did not believe in religion. Pinsker, the present executive director of the Educational Alliance comes from Wilkes Barre. He has held his present position for the last eight years and seems to be largely responsible for the racial Jewishness which is the only bond that holds some of the young people to Judaism. But he is already impatient of small town limitations and contemplates giving up his position to go into publicity work. Unless some unforseen cause should stop the process of attrition it is difficult to see how Savannah Jewry can last more than two or three generations.

There was a small attendance at the lecture which I gave last night because, as Pinsker explained, a mid-week night is a very poor one for lectures. The main lecture evening is Sunday. Moreover this week there has been taking place on large social and sports events. At the game (basketball) played between the Jacksonville and Savannah Jewish athletic groups there were about 450. At my lecture there were about 100. Personally I think this is a good percentage. As for fostering Jewishness I believe the basketball game can compare very favorably with my lecture. My theme was "Toward a Reconstruction of Judaism." The lecture was listened to with understanding by an appreciable part of the audience. I think only one person slept.

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Friday, December 28, 1928: On train to Atlanta, Ga.

I arrived at Jacksonville, Fla. yesterday at 12 N and was met at the station by quite a few people including Lapinsky, a former member of the SAJ and Rabbi Harry Cohen, who was recently elected rabbi of the Jewish Center of Jacksonville. After putting up at a hotel (the Carlington) I was taken to see the Jewish Center building which was erected about a year ago. Its erection at a cost of $150,000 was due mainly to the efforts of Rabbi Benjamin, who coralled in the undertaking a great many Jews that had not known what it was to take an interest in Jewish life. The Jews in Jacksonville number about 3000 out of a population of about 150,000. There is a Reform congregation which is about 60 years old and at present includes about 800 souls. When an east European Jew came to town and he became well to do, if he was not of Lithuanian origin, he would join the Reform congregation. If he was a Lithuanian Jew he was so busy making money that he forgot everything else. If he was not so well to do he would belong to some Hevra and if he came from New York where he worked at one of the needle trades, he would join the Arbeiter Ring.

It was the Jews formerly identified with the small Hevra who engaged Benjamin as their Rabbi. Benjamin is short and stocky with a full blooded bulldog face. He is a forceful speaker though his voice is hard and marked by a Yiddish nasality and accent. Benjamin was a student at the Seminary at the time I helped to build the New York Jewish Center. I recall how I took him through the building while it was in the process of erection and explained to him the philosophy of the Jewish Center. That was I believe in the winter of 1919. He was the only one of the entire Seminary student body who was sufficiently wide awake to want to be informed fully about the purpose and functioning of the Center. Upon graduating from the Seminary he was called to Cleveland where he aroused the Orthodox

group to build a Center on a much larger scale than the one in New York. But, unfortunately, coupled with an unusual amount of energy and initiative he possesses a quarrelsome disposition. His favorite method is bludgeoning people into doing what they ought to do. That in addition to his lack of refinement and his habit of making personal references of an insulting character from the pulpit, makes it impossible for him to continue in charge of the institution which he builds up. The members of the Celveland Center elected Rabbi Solomon Goldman in his place. Thereupon Benjamin moved heaven and earth to oust Goldman. Failing in that he left America and settled in Tel Aviv where with his father he went into the banking and land buying business. His business was probably not run on the highest ethical lines (although I was pleasantly surprised to learn yesterday that a goodly part of his salary that he was earning in Jacksonville was sent by him to Palestine to pay off debts). About three years ago he had to leave Palestine on account of business troubles and he took the position in Jacksonville.

In J. his career was almost as stormy as in Cleveland. He succeeded in making a good many enemies and in widening the gap between the Reform and the Orthodox. He is by nature a reactionary Anything that smacks of liberalsim, be it in religion or economics, elicits his worst passions. Having no regard for the ~~xxx~~ sensibilities of people he ~~xxxxxx~~ openly insulted Rabbi Kaplan, the rabbi of the Reform congregation. Consequwntly whaterver suggestion he made that required the consent of the Reform element would be voted down by them. He tried for example to have the office of the Jewish Welfare organization closed on Sabbaths. But the Reform element with Rabbi Kaplan at the head would simply not hear of it. On the other hand the Orthodox who were unwilling to contribute adequately to the Center were berated by him unceremoniously. There being among them

one or two who saw in the formation of a separate hevra the opportunity for making money through bootlegging, the disgruntled Orthodox gathered about them and constituted themselves a separate congregation. They are now ~~xxxxx~~ attacking the Center as unJewish and state that the only terms on which they would consider joining the Center congregation would be 1: the removal of the name Center; 2: the prohibition of any social events in the auditorium, etc.

Rabbi Cohen is another interesting specimen. Born in Norwich about 30 years ago, he was brought up in a very fanatical atmosphere. Instead of breeding rebellion on him it left him until recently quite imperious to modernism. Of medium height and somewhat sparse build, with glasses seated on a slightly squashed nose and with something of a womanish voice he does not impress one by his personality. He is a good deal of a grind and has an appetite for degrees but he possesses a good memory but lacks originality. I was rather surprised to hear from him yesterday that he has changed his views about a good many things; he even went so far as to admit that more important than reinterpretation was the change of customs to conform to new conditions. He even found a p 180 for a movable Sabbath. He occupied a small position after he graduated from the Seminary. He gave that up and went to study in one of the Lithuanian Yeshivot. While there he married a Ponuvey girl. When I saw her yesterday I could hardly believe that she was only five yeas in this country, so well does she speak English and so Americanized is her bearing.

After having dinner at the Cohens I was taken for anautomobile ride by a Mr. Feldman (one of the Lithuanian Jews who hadn't entered a 'shul' for forty years before Benjamin came). The Lapinskys

and Mrs. Cohen went along. The ride took about four hours. Most of the conversation during the ride turned upon the recent real estate boom in Jacksonville through which fortunes were made and lost in the course of a few months. I was shown square miles of land where it had been planned to build a vast city now abandoned. The most interesting part of the ride was over the beach from which the tide had receded and which was as smooth as a paved road. We went out to take a look at the jetty built by the government to keep the mouth of the St. Augustine clear and we watched the porpoises playing leisurely in the water. On the way back we stopped over at the Lapinskys little home. They treated us to goodies and crowed with delight at my "honoring their home with my presence." They seem to be very sentimental folk and are given to expressing themselves in hyperboles. Mrs. Lapinsky showed me a letter which she received from her daughter who is in New York as an expression of her joy in the fact that her daughter was taking an active part in Hadassah work.

From Rabbi Cohen's home where I had supper Mr. Lapinsky drove me in his car to the hotel and from the hotel to the Jewish Center. He made me exceedingly nervous by the way he drove, especially after he told me that he never drives at night on account of poor eyesight and I saw that car confirmed his statement about its being a very poor one. The car which Feldman drove had a blowout on the way back, but I didn't mind that and rather enjoyed helping jack up the car in order to have another tire put on.

I began my lecture at 8:45. Although here too (as in Savannah) the midweek night was said to be not good for lectures, and this week particularly having had a dance on Christmas night (at the Orthodox Jewish Center!) I had an audience of over 300. While most of those present were of those who are identified with

the Center there was a sprinkling both of the Reform element and the Arbeiter Ring and one intelligent Gentile. I spoke for an hour and ten minutes and answered questions for almost an hour and a half. The Shoket delivered an orthodox harange in broken English; one Arbeiter Ring man made a plea for Yiddish and another for athism, and the Gentlie wanted me to tell him what justification the Jews had for continuing as a people now that their mission of giving religion to the world has been fulfilled. I was well nigh exhausted by the time I was through, but I venture to say that the effect of such a visit in the way of reviving Jewish interest and sentiment is by no means negligible.

Among the chief obstacles to a creative readjustment of Jewish life in the Orthodox rabbinate as represented by the immigrant rabbis from Eastern Europe and the native graduates of the Yeshiva. Of the two the former are by far the more vicious. They are the backbone of obstructionism. They are deferred to by the older generation of immigrant east European Jews. Apart from their narrow and reactionary religious views they have in most cases the old ghetto psychology toward Gentiles and gentile laws and standards. Some even display an utter lack of all standards pertaining to honesty even in their relations to their fellow Jews. Many of them engage in bootlegging and not a few in every kind of shady dealings that promise a profit. Of course there is usually the palliating circumstance that they have no sound means of earning a livelihood but the demoralizing effect upon Jewish life is not in any way mitigated thereby.

Rabbi Cohen told me of an itinerant rabbi by the name of Wiedanski. This wiedanski came to Cohen some time ago to ask him for a letter of introduction recommending his proposed translation

of the Talmud. He also asked Cohen to buy of him a translation of the Shulhan Arukh which he claimed to be the author of. Cohen bought the translation for which he had to pay something like $12. Later Cohen compared the translation with the one that a certain Rabbi Abramowitz published and he found that the two were identical except in the title page. After some time R. Cohen received a letter from an unknown party in some city in the West informing him that the R. Wiedanski whom he had given a litter of introduction swindled $800 out of a poor woman. This woman was a divorcee and married a second husband. There then presented itself a possibility of her remarrying her first husband, which is forbidden by Jewish law. When Wiedanski who happened to be in her city heard of her case he promised that he would obtain for her rabbinic permission to marry her first husband if she would give him $800. That was all she had and as soon as he got it he absconded.

I've just come across an extremely interesting observation by Santayana in "The Sense of Beauty" p. 62. "Man unlike some of the lower animals has not his instincts clearly distinct and intermittent but always partially active and never active in isolation."

If that be the case the departmentalized mind is more akin to that of the lower animals than to what the mind tends to develop into in the human being. Likewise the division of labor in isolating abilities and interacts in order to render them efficient is bound to push down the human mind to the level of the minds of lower animals.

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Saturday, December 29, 1928: Atlanta, Ga., Ansley Hotel

Somewhere in this book I complain of a sense of aloneness in the very midst of the little world in which I move. That sense of aloneness is only subjective state. It is paradise compared to

the oppressive solitude which is real and objective when a person finds himself as I do now away from his little world in a remote city where he has not a single acquaintance to talk to. During all the hours that I have had all to myself my imaginative experience has been rich and satisfying. Between drinking in the delights of the scenery that I saw from the train window as I rode from Jacksonville and having my esthetic faculty harpened by my reading of Santayana's "The Sense of Beauty," my imagination has veritably been having ae royal feast. Uncultivated as my mind is in the appreication of musical form, my enjoyment being limited to the content of the music I am happy that at least natural scenery affords me not merely the calm serenity which derives from its mere mere mass, color and infinite variety, but also that dxquisite joy which comes from the knack which I have acquired of spontaneously dividing up that scenery into unitary landscapes. As I looked out of the train window yesterday I had the sensation of passing through an immense picture gallery hung with painted landscapes, depicting the infinite variations of the bronzes and greens of he earth and the blues and the ambers of the sky made luminous by the fiery gold of the afternoon sun. As my eyes weared through the abundance of seeing, I took up Santayana's book and there my imaginative faculty was being schooled to know itself and to function adequately. With all that I have been restless and unsatisfied because I miss my world. Sant. isright when he says "Social needs are almost as fundamental as vital functions and often more conscious." The very pleasure which I derive from reading ~~it~~ is due not only to the ~~reading~~ feeling of discovery experienced in becoming aware of new truth, but mainly to the anticipation of employing those truths to help others find life - and Jewish life in particular - interesting and beautiful.

It is not without having to overcome the resistance of my entire past training and mode of life that I permit myself to write these notes on the Sabbath day. Yet I feel that it would be nothing but spiritual cowardice on my part to yield to the momentum of past habit and forego this mode of self-expression which affords my inner being its true Sabbath. The only consideration that perhaps ought to weigh with me is that I should not allow myself to do anything which the people of my ~~xxxxx~~ world are under the impression that I do not allow myself. In other words it looks as though I might be justly charged with hypocricy.

Whatever I shall say about hypocricy can naturally be interpreted as a rationalization of my desire to keep faith both with myself and with the public. I refuse, however, to pay any attention to such a construction of an endeavor to justify a course of action which is taken after due weighing of the pros and cons. My general outlook on life which is of a pragmatic character and attaches no significance to absolute principles independnt of context and application does not recognize the duty of making my life an open book to the public so that every Tom and Dick should be able to find out all that he wants to know about my inner life even about my personal habits. I should of course take the public into my confidence, but only to the extent that it is able to follow my reasoning and trust my honesty of purpose. I have certainly gone further than any conservative rabbi in openly avowing, teaching and preaching views that my public has not been pleased to hear. To tell it just now that I do not believe that writing should be forbidden on the Sabbath - provided it is not done as part of a profit-making occupation would prevent me from influencing it to change its mind about the fundamental assumptions of Judaism. When the time will be ripe for my going into a detailed account as to what should be permitted and

and what not I shall give my opinion frankly and openly. As a matter of fact in the article on Sabbath Observance, published in the SAJ Review in the winter of 1927 I enumerate very specifically the types of activity that ought no longer be forbidden on the Sabbath. Sometime ago I told R. Silverman of Hartford and Cohen, formerly of Kansas City, and a few other graduates, that I would permit people who live a great distance from the synagogue to come with their automobiles to services rather than have them stay away and lose all contact with Jewish life. I am not afraid that this attitude will militate against spiritual development in Jewish life. On the contrary, with our new conception of human freedom and personality we cannot but revolt against artificial constraints which hamper the self-expression not only of legitimate impulses but of creative and spiritual energies. This very act in which I now engage, ritually forbidden though it be, has the value of enhancing my personality, of making life more real and worthwhile to me. What folly it would be for me to refrain from it because of an ancient taboo, or even because of some scruples self-imposed to no purpose or good to anyone.

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Monday, December31, 1928: On train from St. Louis to Kansas City,5:20 P.M

When I arrived yesterday at St. Louis at 1:00 P.M. I was met at the station by Rabbi A. E. Halperin, Gilbert Harris, executive director of the YM and Mr. Cooper, regional director of the UPA. I was taken to Halperin's house where I put up during the time that I stayed in St. Louis. About three o'clock Dr. Klausner who teaches business economics at the local college and who is the president of the regional Z.O. came to take me to a hotel where the directors of the Z.O. and of the local Hadassah were waiting to meet me. I found a group of about thirty to forty people. I talked to them informally

on the present Zionist situation and needs of the national Z.O. There were questions asked after I was through with my remarks.

I gave the lecture on "The Reconstruction etc" at the Y.M. Rabbi Halpern introduced me; I spoke for an hour and a quarter. Although I had to work myself into an enthusiasm to overcome the effect of repetition, the audience which was not over large - about 250 - seemed to be interested. Whatever sparkle I may have lacked in the main address I made up for in my replies to the questions asked. The questions centered for the most part upon the reconstruction of the God concept. After the lecture a number of people followed me to R. Halpern's home where the discussion continued to 11:30.

This moring R. Halpern took me to see the class of seven or eight girls who were being taught by a Dr. Reis. The girls seemed to be of the ages between fourteen and sixteen. Reis has made considerable progress with them by teaching at all possible odd times with a view of training them as teachers in the Hebrew schools of which he is principal. This work is entirely voluntary on his part and he was very anxious that I should visit the class.

After lunch and on the way to take the train for Kansas City I stopped over at one of the hotels where I was met by Mr. Grossberg the chairman of the UPA campaign, Dr. Klausner and a few other people. The conversation turned upon the question of getting some outstanding non-Zionist to address a regional UPA conference to take place at Kansas City.

The pulse of Jewish life in St. Louis is not as weak as I have found it in the smaller towns. The Jews are said to number 50,000 out of a population of 1,000,000. There are four Reform congregations with a total membership of about 1700 families. A merger of these congregations is contemplated at the present time. There

are only two functioning rabbis there just now. One is R. Thurman, a pushing energetic young man of the Litvack type. He is one of those younger Reform rabbis who if they have any Zionist leanings are sure to have them figure as little as possible in their practical work in the ministry. The second is R. Miller who is said to be a rabid anti-Zionist.

When R. Halpern came to St. Louis twelve years ago he found the Orthodox Jews in a very disorganized state. His congregation consisted then of sixty members and all that they had was a small rudely built synagogue without facilities even for a school. It now numbers 400 members with a week day school of 150 children and with about as many additional children in the Sunday school. Until this year R. Halpern used to conduct Friday night services, but he found that the attendance ~~xxxxx~~ dwindled down to 75 to 100. He therefore transferred his sermon to Saturday morning. The average attendance is between four and five hundred. Most of those who attend live far away from the synagogue and therefore have to come with their automobiles. It is interesting to note the matter of course spirit with which a congregation that claims to be orthodox permits what legalistically is tantamount to the utmost violation of the Sabbath. Yet were the least innovation suggested in the ritual or manner of service it would be sure to call forth the most violent opposition.

R. Halpern is neither a scholar nor a thinker, neither an orator nor an administrator. But he possesses just enough ability and application to attend to the detail duties of his calling and by dint of these qualities he has worked himself up from a salary of $1500 to one of $9000.. He is liked by his people and his position is secure - something which can be said of very few of the Seminary graduates. He knows how to get along with people and has contributed considerably to the fact that the Reform element reckon with the

Orthodox in their communal undertakings. He succeeded in having a kosher kitchen introduced into the $2,000,000 Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. He is consulted by the directors of the YM with regard to activities to be conducted on the Sabbath, etc.

The YM & YWHA building was put up two years ago at a cost of $600,000. Harris who is the executive director comes from a Reform home. It was mainly through his efforts that the institution was established. He impressed me as a fine type of young gentleman. The annual budget of the institution is $100,000. The number of people reached by its activities is 100,000.

The Zionist group is stronger and more active there than in most towns. In that result too it seems R. Halpern has a considerable share.

* * * *

Tuesday, January 1, 1929: Kansas City.

In St. Louis I learned of the existence there of a most unusual phenomenon of Jewish life. A group of sixteen women took up the study of the Bible more than seven years ago and are keeping it up to this day. They began from Genesis and went through the entire Bible with the aid of the Cambridge and International Critical commentaries. At each session a different member would read and explain a portion of the text in the light of these commentaries. She constitutes for that session the leader of the group. After having covered the entire Old Testament they debated among themselves whether they should proceed with the New or review the Old Testament. They felt that they wanted to go over the Old Testament again before tackling the New. Many other women have asked to be admitted to the group but they were refused, the purpose being to limit it to those who began the Bible from the beginning. From what I could gather not one of the original group has dropped out. This unusual achievement

Kaplan on
a Trip
Southwest

is due to a certain Mrs. Lipschitz. Her husband was a physician who died young as a result of septic poisoning contracted from a patient. She came to see me at R. Halpern's home before I went to the lecture and was among those who gathered in his home after the lecture. From her questions I could see that she was inclined to be of the romantic type of religionist that has little patience with the process of analysis and conscious reconstruction. She betrayed evidences of having a good deal in common with the Orach Hayim crowd, many of whom she knew, because they would eat at her mother's home, whenever they were at St. Louis. In former days it was supposed to have been the only open kosher home. She would have been a second Mrs. Asher if she hadn't read the I.C. C.

No one came to meet me when I arrived at Kansas City last night at 9:30. Rabbi Herman Cohen is no longer here; he is now in St. Paul. Mr. Magida who was supposed to meet me was prevented from doing so but sent me a telegram which was handed to me as I left the train and which directed me to stop at the Mayfair Hotel.

The subject of my address tomorrow is the Poetic Approach to Judaism. I spent most of the time since yesterday afternoon rethinking the ideas I had gathered on that subject. In the first place I tried to discover a method of motivating the need for a new approach to Judaism. That tought to be a very simple matter. The reason we seem to be making little headway with the solution of the inner problem of Jewish life is that we do not appreciate sufficiently the need of an entirely new approach to things Jewish. More literally even than in Ezekiel's days is there need for our giving heed to his extortation to make ourselves a new heart and a new spirit. We must differentiate clearly between the state of mind which

qualified one to do so today. From this point I proceed to discuss the creedal mood or state of mind as it found expression in the belief in miracles, in the value of the mizvot.

But it is one thing to know what's wrong, and quite another to know what's right. Realizing the inadequacy of the creedal state of mind, our man of light and leading thought it necessary to bring to bear upon Judaism the rational mood. Here I indicate the failure of that approach and come to the main point I want to make, in which I suggest the planned adoption of the poetic approach.

The poetic mood is that mental attitude which enables us to see in the particular things, events and phenomena of the world the manifestation of life either universal or human. It is because the divine meets the human at the point of its universality that poetry borders on religion. Poetry differs from common placeness in not being content with the foreground of experience - the particular. It differs from the philosophical or scientific mood in not being contented with the background of experience. The more concrete experiences that are enjoyed in this manner the richer one's life and personaltiy are bound to be, because each concrete experience becomes for the time being an end in itself insofar as it is a world in itself.

As Jews we are the heirs to a social heritage which is likely to be wasted if we will not learn to approach it in this poetic mood. Such an approach implies first, recognizing the values and making the most of the particularity of Jewish life; secondly, beholding in the particularity the unique ~~expression~~ expression of universal tendencies.

If Jewish life is to have particularity it must be a thing of the senses. It must be tangible, visible, audible. It must have color and form. It must be redeemed from mere abstractness. The

case of Aime Palliere illustrates this truth. The p.190 pictures, the neilah service, the Hebrew language, the acquaintance with Jewish customs drew him to Jewish life. He certainly did not bring a creedal or rational state of mind to expressions of Jewish life. He was intrigued by these expressions because of their concrete and specific character. He completed the demand of the poetic mood by trying to discover the universal implications which he was furnished by the Italian rabbi with whom he struck up a correspondence.

If then Jewish life must, to begin with, abound in things tangible, etc. it follows that it must have one place in the world where it cam comply with this requirement to the utmost and maximum degree. Hence the need for Palestine.

Outside of Palestine that same princple of particularity must be translated into the maximum of folkways, folk habits, and folk arts possible in a non-Jewish environment.

Secondly if these concrete elements are to elicit the poetic response they must be appreicated as expressions of the universally human. Instead of the creedal approach which treated the concrete elements as outside of the order of human experience, and the rational approach which treats the concrete elements as an evil that is not always necessary, the poetic approach being humanist in character sees in all these concrete values of Jewish life unique manifestations of some universal human aspiration the aspiration after that type of nationhood which shall enable the individual men and women to find that fulfillment without which they cannot be completely human and serenly happy.

The Bible can no longer be approached from the creedal standpoint. The scientific study of it merely sees in it the universal laws of human culture. What we need is the type of poetic appreciation which will interpret it for us the epic of the universal

human passion for nationhood in its most ideal form. Far from having attained that nationhood the Jews certainly expressed in the Bible the yearning after that kind of national life which makes for universal peace and progress. Since every human yearning after perfection is the highest revelation of God, the Bible may be considered the highest revelation of God, using revelation not in a magical but in a poetic sense.

The ceremony of Habdalah may be good to symbolize the poetic mood. It calls attention to Jewish life as a thing of the five senses consecrated to the task of redeeming life from the commonplace and secular and [illegible] it the beauty of holiness.

Magida called at the hotel this morning at 10:15 and we took a walk. He told me of the difficulty the former congregation of R. Herman Cohen is experiencing in finding a successor to Cohen. They are looking for a man who has achieved a reputation and one whose personality would enable him to win an extensive following. They tried out David Goldstein and Malev. The fact that Goldstein read his sermon disqualified him at once. Malev had nothing of interest to say. Gordon preached during the holidays and made a good impression but he has had to go back to N.Y. to complete his studies at the Seminary. The man they would liketo get is Solomon Goldman of Cleveland.

It is evident that the future of Judaism in this country depends first and foremost upon the rabbinate. Far more than Hasidism, American Judaism is a cult based upon the personality of its spiritual leaders. It is Zadikism in a new garb.

I had lunch at the home of the Pines. The family observes kashrut. Both husband and wife - a couple in the thirties - are quite educated and read quite extensively. Magida and his wife (who is a sister of Mrs. Abe Burstein) were at lunch with us. Afterwards a young couple, Fink and his wife, called. This Mrs. Fink is the chairman of the Junior group formed last spring in R. Herman Cohen's synagogue. Without any professional leadership this group has managed to continue to the present day. I am trying to have them become an SAJ chapter.

10:15 P.M.

Just came from the Magidas where I had supper. The Pines were also there. After supper a number of people came to meet me. The Finks and Mr. Harry Friedberg who is president of the local ZO which consists of 150 members. Friedberg impressed me as exceedingly in earnest about Zionism and anxious to learn how to make it felt in Jewish life. He took very kindly to my suggestion to stimulate the demand for Palestinian art objects both for the purpose of increasing the Palestinian output and of introducing a Jewish atmosphere into the Jewish home.

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Thursday, January 3, 1929: On train from Kansas to Chicago

At 11:00 A.M. yesterday morning Harry Friedberg called at my hotel and drove me to the Hotel Baltimore where a luncheon reception was to be given me by the local ZO and Hadassah. While he impressed me as a very serious Zionist and good worker the only ~~xxx~~ new idea that emerged from his talk was that the Zionist Organization ought to ~~xxxx~~ pay the railroad fare of members of the administrative committee who lived far from N.Y. He also suggested the sending of alternates to be elected by the local ZOs. No doubt this contest with the central administrative committee would activize the Zionists in the provinces.

At the luncheon which from the standpoint of location, food and service was unusually adequate there were about 75 present, mostly women. I spoke more eloquently than I usually do. The discussion was sterile, except for the fact that it gave me an occasion, (which had been arranged by me beforehand) to suggest that the Junior Assembly be merged with the local ZO and that the local ZO become an SAJ chapter. Fink who is the head of the Junior Assembly gave me the lead to offer this suggestion. It seems that Greenburg who corresponded with me about the Junior Assembly (he is a young man of 27, a lawyer and somewhat of a pushing sentimentalist) has lost out with the Magidas. I told Magida after the luncheon that I looked to him to take a leading part in organizing the SAJ chapter. He lacks, however, the necessary background and enthusiasm and I doubt whether he will do anything. As for the reaction of those present at the luncheon to my talk there is probably a great deal of truth in what Magida told me that while my talk was a very high order, the people wanted Zionist gossip.

After the meeting I accepted the invitation of Michelson, the president of the Keneset Israel Beth Shalom Congr (of which Rabbi Herman Cohen was rabbi for over seven years) to come to his office to discuss the question of getting a rabbi for their congregation. This Michelson strikes me as a very crude specimen of humanity who, as I understand, through sheer luck has made a good deal of money in the cash register business. I found him in his office together with his lawyer, Ottenberg, who had been president of the congregation. It was he who got the congregation into heavy indebtedness through his ambitious building program. As soon as he found himself unable to cope with the situation he resigned from the presidency. But a scapegoat had to be found and what is a rabbi for if not to suffer himself to be the scapegoat?

There were to have been some more present to discuss the problem of the rabbinate with me but the notice to have them come was too short. Michelson tried to impress upon me the fact that a Kansas City position offered its holder an opportunity to exercise influence over the Jewry of the entire region between Chicago and Dallas. The type of man he wanted was one of whom he would feel proud to see invited to speak before the Chamber of Commerce, Rotarian Club. He never mentioned a word about influencing the young, being a scholar or saintly. That constitutes the great card which is played by the reform rabbi. It is through his being called upon by the gentiles to act as the representation of the Jews that the reform Jews are treated with any kind of respect by the gentiles. He thus helps to give the reform Jews social standing. That is what the conservative Jews want their rabbi to do for them -- give them social standing which they at present lack. I say this in no spirit of disparagement, yet to make of that function the principal if not the only duty of the rabbi is certainly not conducive to the development of learning or spirituality.

Finally I gave the lecture for which I had travelled to Kansas City. My subject was the Poetic Approach to Judaism. There was an audience of about 300. While it appealed to some who are interested in Judaism and would really want Judaism to continue, it did not seem to take with those who have been brought up on the teachings of Reform. Magida told me of the remark made to him by the president of the YM who is an out assimilationist (and whose acting as president of the YM Magida is unable to explain) "If there is anything noble in Judaism let us have it without any of that hocus pocus advocated by Kaplan."

Inclined as I am to giving Reform credit for having emancipated the Jew from the shackles of magical religion, I have failed

to note to what extent the Reform rabbis have brought American Judaism to its present low estate. Samuel Schulman sowed the seed of anti-Zionism when he was rabbi at K.C. and his successor cultivated the growth, so that it will take years for the mischief to be undone.

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Thursday, January 3, 1929: On train from Chicago to N.Y., 9:15 P.M.

I forgot to mention that before the lecture last night I had dinner at the home of Mrs. Leavitt, the daughter of a family by the name of Davidson. The Davidsons are Des Moines people who have kept up their correspondence of Mother, Sophie and Phineas since their stay in Des Moines over twenty years ago. The Leavitts are well to do and have a very fine home on the outskirts of K.C. Their home is kosher. Through an oversight of the maid who gave the order at the confectioners, ice cream instead of sherbert was served after the meat dinner. Mrs. Leavitt felt very much embarrassed at the mistake and quietly had my portion removed and instead I was given a piece of cake. There were some other folks present but I did not find their company any too enjoyable. The center of the scene was held by a Mr. Katz who made a great success in the drug business and most of the talk turned upon how he dreaded the trip in Yellowstone Park on account of the reckless driving of the chauffeur's in the mountain reads.

When I got to Chicago I called up Kadushin. I had about one and a half hours time before taking the 20th Cent. Limited for N.Y. so he came to see me at the Lasalle St. Station. He expressed his disapproval of my spending time in travel instead of writing. In discussing with him R. Halpern of St. Louis he remarked justly that Halpern's influence was limited to work of a pastoral character but was practically nil educationally and culturally. The elementary

school was poorly organized (I recall Halpern's saying that he hadn't looked at the Dalton lessons which he had received from Chicago). Nor did he make any attempt to appeal to the intellectual interests of the younger folks.

In view of the fact that I have to preach Saturday morning I thought instead of giving a sermon I might organize the impression of Jewish life I gathered in the course of the trip so as to give the audience at the services next Sabbath an idea of the destructive and constructive elements in the American Jewish scene.

A Survey of Jewish Life in Six Typical Communities

The Jewish population in the smallest of these communities is 3000; in the largest 50,000. Nearly every Jew belongs to one of the following groups:

1. The Orthodox -- They have no conception whatever of the Jewish problem as one of adjustment. Goyim and Goyishness are to them the same all the world over both past and present. Their psychology is entirely that of the small town in the Jewish Pale of twenty-five years ago. They are completely nonplussed by the attitude of their children whom they try in vain to drag to "shul" and a few of whom learn from the Shoket how to davin. For themselves they want a "shul" where they can "davin" on Sabbaths and holidays and where they can occasionally listen to a "maggid" or an itinerary "Rav."

When one of these "Rabbanim" come to them they do not inquire as to his ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ authority or qualification. They are impressed by his long beard and rabbinic looks and receive him with a great deal of satisfaction because he represents to them the old home associations which they cherish. They cannot afford to support an old time "Rav" and they find compensation for their lack of a permanent "Rav" by the occasional visits of these itinerary rabbanim. Among the latter are emissaries (meshulohim) of the NY Yeshiva. These emissaries obtain funds for the Yeshiva from fifty to sixty percent of which con-

stitutes their commission. The main practical objective upon which these Rabbanim concentrate their efforts is to instigate their listeners to oppose the efforts of the so-called modern orthodox and conservative congregations. Quote the case of Jacksonville where the name Jewish Center is regarded as goyish. The only redeeming factor in the case of the larger Jewish communities is the interest in the Zionist movement through affiliation with the Mizrahi.

2. The Reform Jews constitute socially the most influential element of the Jewish population. They are devoid of all Jewish background and Jewish sympathies. The only sense in which they are Jews is that they are not goyim and do not yet intermarry on a large scale with goyim. They will not be gotten too easily to contribute to the upbuilding of Palestine even through the non-Zionist group. The Zionists look with a great deal of apprehension to the practical outcome of the extended agency. This antipathy against Palestine is to be traced directly to the active propaganda of the Reform rabbis of the old school and the disciples have bettered the instruction to such a degree that they will hardly listen to either their old or new spiritual guide when urged to participate in the redemption of Palestine. So far the chorus of approval from the Reform camp consists mainly of the younger rabbis who come from orthodox homes and to whom Zionism has supplied with the main raison d'etre for their rabbinic calling.

Especially noteworthy is the racial Judaism which the Reform Jews are cultivating. It satisfies the inherent demand that Judaism be something more than abstract religion and is used at the same time to offset the national expression of Jewish life. The hospitals and the Y's are the visible expression of their Jewish racial zeal. Any one with Jewish sensibilities is even more offended by the goyish Jewishness of those who attend the Y's than by Jewish goyishness one

finds in the temples. The executive directors who are young men too much in contact with Jewish to have altogether escaped the influence of the national reawakening would like, if they only knew how, to put some Jewish content into the activities of the Y's. But they have neither the background, the knowledge nor the fervor to exert themselves seriously in behalf of intensive Jewishness.

3. The only Jewish groups that evince a tendency to deal with Jewish life as a problem in social and spiritual adjustment and that hold out promise of evolving as complete a type of Jewish life as we can hope for in this country are the so-called enlightened Orthodox or Conservative. The extent to which they will attain that goal depends upon the number of high calibre men that the Seminary will graduate and the amenability of these groups to influence at the hands of these men. There are many towns with Jewish populations between 3000 to 5000 without this third group. Those are in a most hopeless condition from a Jewish point of view. On the other hand where these groups exist we have at least the making of a Hebrew school that is training a future generation of Jews. There one finds a stirring of Jewish interest among the young people.

It is almost pathetic to note to what extent the entire Jewish situation hinges upon the presence and ability of the young rabbi. The moment there is an interregnum all his work is undone. This very type of community is as likely as any of the Y's to have a dance on Christmas eve. The worst drawback in the progress of Jewishness of these groups is the uncouthness of the lay-leaders. It seldom occurs to them to look to their rabbi first and foremost as the man to build up the inner life of their people in accordance with the highest conceptions of Judaism. Learning, piety even probity are never the qualities that these lay leaders ask for when they seek a rabbi for their congregations. The chief consideration with

them is that they should be able to have their rabbi represent them to the Goyim by addressing meetings of the Chambers of Commerce and the Rotarian Clubs, so that they shall feel themselves the social equals of the Reform Jews.

4. Another element that is seldom reckoned with by the foregoing three groups is the Arbeiter Ring. They represent the radical wing among the Jews. They differ from the other Jewish radicals in wanting to remain Jews and in having a constructive Jewish philosophy which is in the main the philosophy formulated by Zhitlowsky. They are ardent upholders of Yiddish (as against Hebrew) as the national distinctive language of the Jewish masses. Toward religion they take a negative attitude. At tremendous sacrifice and in the face of temendous odds they maintain afternoon schools where they translate their philosophy into an educational program.

Not in any way coordinate with the four groups enumerated but one which has potentialities for Jewish survival and growth is the Zionist group. It is exceedingly small numbering from 50 to 450 and a somewhat larger number among the women.

Here and there one meets groups spontaneously organized like some oasis in a wilderness. A bible study group of women who for more than seven years have kept up the study of the Bible with commentaries and have by now covered from Genesis to Chronicles; a young peoples group led by a few college men of intellectual ability.

In sum I venture the estimate that if the Jewish situation is to be saved it will be in the main through three agencies: 1) the conservative rabbi and 2) the Zionist movement and 3) the communal centers.

It is now 11:20 P.M. I want to note that with the help of God, the Life, the Love and the Intelligence of the Universe, I have been able to turn to good account the hours I am spending on this train. I thank Thee, O God for the blessings which I enjoy. Amen.

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Friday, January 4, 1929: Before leaving train

I was kept for a long time from falling asleep last night by the ~~xxxx~~ thought of the striking contrast between the way the lower East Side audience listened and reacted to my talk on the poetic approach to Judaism and the way the Kansas City audience listened and reacted. With the former I felt as though I were in my own camp, with the latter I felt as though I visited an enemy camp offering terms of peace. The cold impassive stare of the K.C audience still lingers in my mind.

In former days when dogmas were regarded as the essence of religion and whispering campaigns were prevalent in religious circles some heresy hunter would surely have pounced upon the phrases by which I designate the divine aspect of existence and would have cried out "Eureka." I always knew Kaplan was a Christian at heart. Why could you want a more certain affirmation of the Trinity? Life, the father, Love the son and Intelligence the Holy Ghost." By all that is sacred I would declare such a heresy hunter a fool and a mischief maker. Heartily repudiating as I do Christianity and all its works I have nevertheless always maintained that the same theological doctrines appear in different and the most hostile religions simply under different names. There is nothing philosophically wrong with a rationally conceived Trinity. But my gorge rises as I think of the Son.Mind you, not the poor simp Jesus, but the Son!

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Monday, January 7, 1929: At Canton, O: 5:50 P.M.

It was certainly a joy to get back home. I kept on calculating the number of days and hours that I had to be away from home. What an ordeal it must have been for husbands and fathers to leave their families in the Old Country to seek their fortune in America, not knowing when they might be in a position to send for their families. It is remarkable how readily on the one hand the human being becomes softened and in need of all the comfort and love and happiness that fall to his lot, and on the other hand, how with all his pain in missing what he has become accustomed to he is strong enough to endure the ordeal of privation when driven by necessity.

Here am I again sitting all alone in a hotel in Canton. What was all this traveling necessary for? How ridiculous it would be to account for my having consented to go on these lecture tours by any single motive! To earn a few hundred dollars? Am I as greedy as all that? To come into first hand contact with Jewish life? To some extent. To spread the idea of Judaism as a changing civilization? If I hadn't what to say I would not have undertaken to lecture to unfamiliar audiences. More than anythingelse it is the restlessness of soul due to my having to live continually on faith and not seeing any tangible results of all Jewish effort. I am like a feverish patient turning from side to side.

Saturday morning I gave the survey which is outlined a few pages ahead. There were 125 present. It seemed to have pleased the audience.

Sunday morning I addressed the Zionist National Executive Committee which met at the Waldorf-Astoria. In the address I emphasized the importance of having Zionist propaganda resumed with greater vigor than heretofore. I also made a number of suggestions about increasing the membership and reorganizing the framework of the Organization. I was unable to attend the afternoon session because I had to be (I thought) at the Teachers Institute. But I heard enough during the morning session to realize that those present would pay scant heed to any of the practical suggestions made by me and Rubinow, but would use up all the time to frustrate the reiterated effort of the Admin istrative Committee to cut down on expenses by reducing the Zionist Yiddish weekly to a bi-weekly. Ephraim Kaplan described this effort as an expression of the Nordic tendency that has crept into the Zionist movement. I was also taken to task for stressing the critical character of the situation of the ZOA. The mentality of our people is warped by centuries of oppression and ? (p.201). They sentimentalize and are today devoid of a sense of proportion. I amwaiting impatiently for the opportunity to resign from the chairmanship of the Administrative Committee.

I arrived this noon12:09 at Canton. Through an accident Bernard Truxton, the exeuctive Director of the community center here was not informed of the time of my arrival so that I had to find my own way to the Northern Hotel where I am now. When I called him up he came together with Rabbi Latz, the rabbi of the Reform congregation. I learned from him the following about the Jewish community here. The general population numbers about 116,000 of whom about 3500 are Jews. The Orthodox group constitute the majority of the actively Jewish population. They had originally two congregations, but the Rav who served these two congregations displeased a number

of his congregants. This led to a third congregation being formed. The Rav, a man of about 35 named Pelkowitz, had come directly from Wolozkis. He was absolutely intransigeant in his insistence on Shulkan Arukh Judaism. He had no conception whatever of conditions in this country. After having been here for about eight years he went to Bridgeport, Conn. The Reform Congregation numbers 175 families. Of these less than 25 are German Jewish stock. The others come from strictly Orthodox homes. Many of them, including the president, Mr. Oscar, describe themselves as having Orthodox sympathies. Their rabbi, Rabbi Latz, who is an HUC graduate of class 1915 struck me as a rather weak man from the standpoint of personality, ~~though~~ he seems to be so conspicuously unaggressive and harmless as to make up for his lack of ability as speaker or organizer. Truxton described him to me as a great disorganizer. There are also representatives of the radical wing. They have about 25 families which are identified with the Arbeiter Ring. So far they have not been able to organize a school of their own which they are maintaining at considerable sacrifice.

When I got Truxton on the phone almost the first thing he said to me was that he would like me to straighten out the Talmud Torah tangle in this town. When he came over he explained what he meant. There was a TT which had more than 200 children. Due to poor quarters and bad management the attendnace is now less than 80. After considerable questioning I gathered that he wanted me to induce some of the leading representatives both Reform and Orthodox to start a campaign for a community TT. I consented to meet whatever committee he could get together. At four o'clock I went over with him to the Center where I met that Mr. Oscar and two men representing the Orthodox. The discussion did not proceed very far before I realized that it would be impossible to get the Orthodox to come in as a group to

work with the Reform in behalf of a community Hebrew School. A man by the name Soskin proved to be the type of Orthodox die hard that is obstructing the progress and adjustment of Jewish life. He voiced the dualistic philosophy of living and making a living. While we may permit ourselves many a wrong in the process of making a living in that which constitutes living we must uphold strict Orthodoxy. This is a translation of what he actually said. Upon my informing him that he should not expect to secure any teacher who would honestly believe in an Orthodoxy like that of his fromer Rov Pelkowitz, he said, "If that is the case, we ought to go to Sinai and give back the Torah."

I gave him to understand that he himself had departed from the Judaism of his father by drawing a distinction between "living" and "making a living." His father would have spanked him for saying such a thing. Seeing that it was useless to try to bring together the Reform and the Orthodox elements, I advised Oscar to have his people take the initiative in a campaign for a community Hebrew School. Instead of building a separate Sunday School which could never be run efficiently they should have their (the Reform congregation) school part of the Hebrew School. I assured him that many of the present Orthodox group would come into this work as individuals.

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Tuesday, January 8, 1929, 2:00 P.M. on train to Rochester, N.Y.

Somewhere in this book I refer to Luther as having had to rely upon the backing of worldly powers to achieve his reforms. This is verified by the following: "Martin Luther left to his own fate would be known today as a courageous but misguided monk who had tried his hand at playing reformer and who had been burned at the stake for his troubles. M.L. supported by a few landed proprietors might have survived a few years longer, but sooner or later his